ROOT & BRANCH

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ROOT & BRANCH

VIETNAM

On Tuesday evening, January 23, it was announced simultaneously in Washington, Hanoi, and Saigon that a cease-fire agreement had been reached and that peace was at hand in Indochina. Of course, there would be a week of fierce fighting throughout South Vietnam before the settlement would go into effect, each side struggling as in a football game to gain more ground before the whistle blew. And the fighting would go on, though on a reduced scale, and without the American bombing of Vietnam, indefinitely. But the situation in Indochina has indeed taken a new turn.

The American anti-war movement, having just demonstrated over inauguration weekend for Nixon to "Sign now!" has had its wish granted. As Nixon promised, American troops and planes will leave Vietnam, American P.O.W.'s will be reunited with their families, a full tally of the American dead will be drawn up, and the Vietnamese will be allowed to settle their affairs among themselves -- which, as Dr. Kissinger pointed out on January 24th, has always been the American goal.

If the peace thus represents the achievement of American goals, the North Vietnamese in turn have proclaimed a great victory for the Vietnamese people. One thing that's clear is that "what's goin' on ain't exactly clear." Nonetheless, some elements of the situation should be apparent to all.

The U.S. government has opted for the cease-fire in pursuit of its own objectives, not as a result of pressure from the anti-war movement. Throughout the war, that movement has influenced the manner in which the U.S. government carried out its policy, but the objectives of policy remained unaffected. The movement was unable to root opposition to the war in people's real daily oppression by the system that created the war. This narrowness was not so much a tactical error as a reflection of the real limits of the movement. Largely composed of students and professionals (including would-be professional revolutionists), in the absence of a radical workingclass movement, the New Left as a whole was in no position to understand the system it could analyze only in terms of its own "middle class" experience.

Against the image of American "madness" or imperialism, the movement posed the image of the force of "national liberation" as the other factor of the situation, in which the Spirit of the People was bound to triumph over the Man's Technology. It was mostly forgotten that the Spirit fortified itself with Russian and Chinese rockets, guns, ammunition, Migs, tanks, oil, and food. Seen as the "classic" example of a small nation holding off a great power, the fate of Vietnam has in truth always been determined by the needs of the great powers. As World War II opened the possibility for the anticolonial struggle, the Cold War made possible its continuation, as a battle by proxy between capitalism and the state-controlled economic systems of the East. Today, the rapprochement between the U.S. and both China and Russia has spelled the end of the ability of North Vietnam and the N.L.F. to continue their fight on its previous level.

The basis for the current "cooling" of the Vietnamese civil war is thus to be

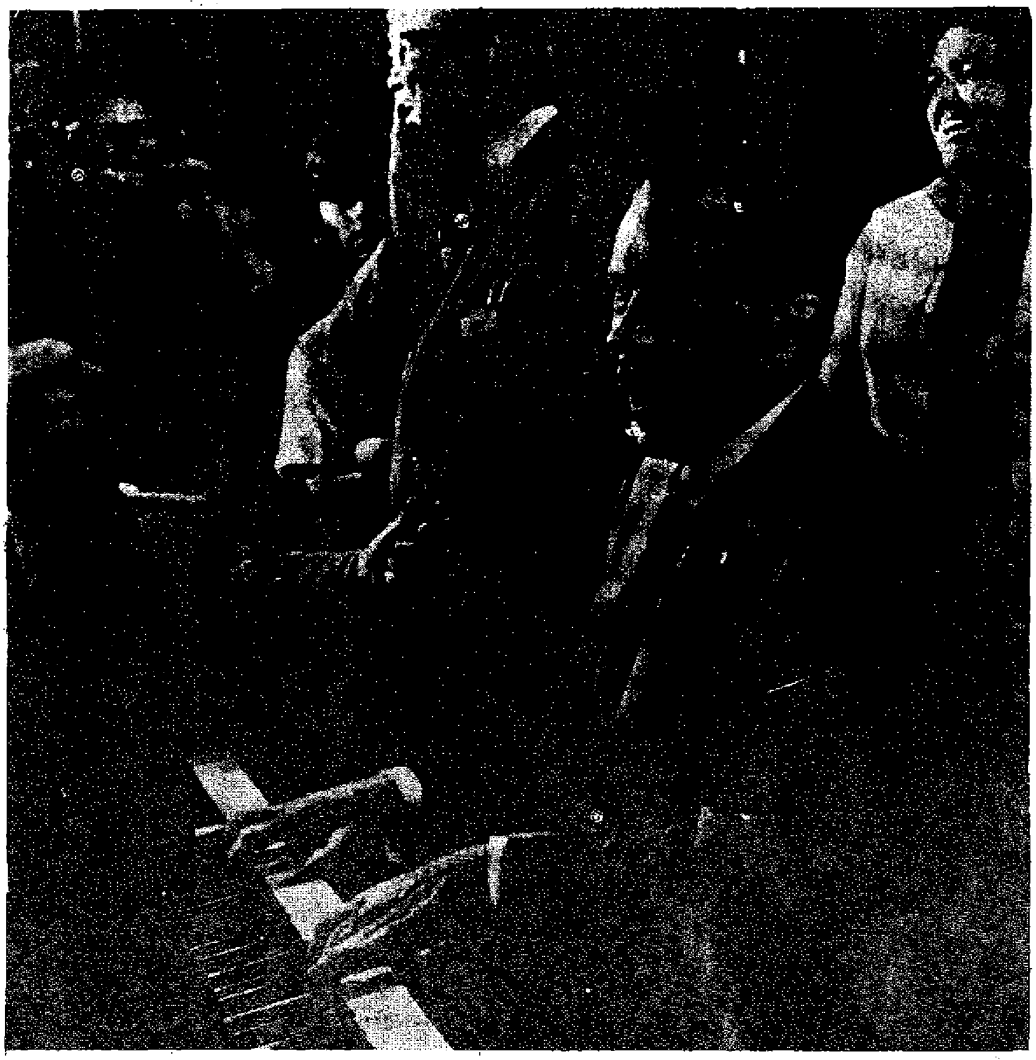
found in the current needs of the major powers involved. America, driven by the logic of capitalism to lay claim to the underdeveloped world liberated from European control by the last World War, has shown its unwillingness to let the extent of that control be diminished. The state-run systems, in the meantime, have accumulated economic problems of their own -- expressed in a slowdown of economic growth -- which makes greater participation in the capitalist world market and access to Western technology a worthwhile trade for a temporary lowering of the level of conflict. In addition, the division between the two major Eastern powers put America in an especially strong position. While Laird, in his farewell news conference as Secretary of Defense, pointed out that "our strongest weapon is the Russians' desire for trade," W.H. Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, expressed "the prevailing view" in the State Department "that China pushed for an accord to curb Moscow's and Hanoi's influence in Indochina." Speaking on Meet the Press on January 28, Sullivan explained Nixon's strategy in mining North Vietnamese waters in this context, as producing "a situation in which North Vietnam became 100 per cent dependent on China for the provision of its equipment. . . Nothing could go through the waters and come into Haiphong overseas. This means that China's preoccupation with Soviet encirclement came into play. This means that China's feeling that it would rather have four Balkanized states in Indochina rather than an Indochina that was dominated by Hanoi and possibly susceptible to Moscow came into play." (New York Times, 31 Jan.)

It would be pointless to bemoan the limitation of national liberation struggles by the needs of the big powers. "National liberation" means the struggle for entry into the world of nation-states -- a world dominated by big power interests. This has always been understood by anti-colonial governments and forces -- hence the North Vietnamese (and Cuban) support for the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Imperialism -- of the Western or the Eastern variety -- is an integral aspect of the social systems which have organized their political life in the form of the nationstate. National independence, on the level of world politics, can only mean the choice between varying degrees of integration into the "spheres of influence" of the state-controlled economies of Russia and China.

For this reason also we can be sure that the war in Indochina, however long the current truce may last, has not come to an end, and that it will take its place as one of a series of similar conflicts all over the globe. Corporate capitalism and the state-run systems of Russia and China -- whatever their current needs for entente -- continue to confront each other as antagonistic systems striving to secure and to expand their mutually exclusive spheres of exploitation of labor and resources. The "limited conflicts" known also as "brushfire wars" in the parlance of the masters of the world are less threatening to the great powers than a direct confrontation between them (though this too is not an impossibility).

What this means is that the cease-fire in Vietnam can be welcomed only as a temporary diminution of the slaughter to which the world's population is condemned until the rival systems of exploitation -- in whose struggles for control of them they serve as cannon fodder -- are destroyed. The real tragedy of Vietnam is not its failure to achieve national self-determination, but the physical destruction of its cities and countryside, the deaths and dislocation of the people who live there. It must be remembered that "the nation" or "the people" in Vietnam as everywhere consists of several groups, with distinct and often incompatible interests -- workers struggling for better pay and conditions, peasants for control of the land and its product, the intelligentsia and native bourgeoisie for political and economic control over "their" country. The tragedy of the exploited people of Indochina is that they are forced to struggle and die for a better life -- and even for survival -- within the meager possibilities set by the dominating structures of class oppression.

The system which has wreaked so much terror and pain on the Indochinese has increased pain and deprivation in store for the working populations of the developed countries too. As at the time of the first imperialist world war, the choice is between socialism and a barbarism now expanded by a new technology of destruction. Hopefully the world will not have to be reduced to a total shambles before we join the common people of Vietnam to destroy the system which is our common oppressor.



A VERY GREAT YEAR ?

Each year, the Economic Report of the President allows America's economic managers to reflect upon the glories of the past year and the triumphs of the year to come. This document provides us, too, an admirable opportunity to evaluate what is going on in the American economy.

The past few years have provided new proof of the effectiveness of Keynsian techniques of expanding and contracting the economy by expanding and contracting government budget deficits. In 1965, a massive deficit to finance the Vietnam War was followed by massive inflation. Nixon, on entering office in 1969, cut military spending, maintained special war taxes, and reduced government deficits, thus deliberately bringing on recession. This policy, with a little additional help from wage-price controls, brought inflation down to just over 3% with an official unemployment rate of over 6%.

To overcome this recession, a budget deficit of roughly $25 billion was allowed

for the current fiscal year, resulting in the current economic expansion. This is a somewhat peculiar expansion, however; unemployment has been reduced by only 1%, remaining over 5%. Nonetheless, the budget planners are already planning to "slow down" the economy by June. They believe this is essential to "prevent this expansion from becoming an inflationary boom." Nixon, fully realizing the relation between budget deficits and inflation, says he has "put restraining Federal expenditures at the top of the list of economic policies for 1973." Nor is this policy alarmist; very substantial inflationary pressure had already developed by January, when the report was issued, even though unemployment was over 5%. In January alone, wholesale food prices increased 5%, indicating rising wage demands to follow.

All this makes the meaning of Keynsian techniques clearer. All they mean in practice is that the economic managers can shuttle the economy back and forth between inflation and recession. The entire period of "post-war prosperity" -- alleged to prove that the business cycle was a thing of the past -- can now be seen as a period of ever shorter and ever wilder swings between these two extremes. The triumph of modern economics is that it can reduce unemployment to 4% by raising inflation to 6%, or, conversely, it can reduce inflation to 3% by raising unemployment to 6%. (The increasing inability to have both full employment and price stability is politely called the shift in the Phillips curve.)

Liberals propose a straightforward solution to this problem. Why not simply keep budget deficits high, the economy booming, and accept the consequent inflation? This was essentially the approach of the Johnson Administration. The result of such inflation, however, was to price American goods out of the world market and create the balance of payments deficit that led to the collapse of first the Bretton Woods Agreement and then the Smithsonian Agreement through the devaluation of the American dollar. As repeated currency crises have shown, this problem has deepended; the American trade deficit is currently $6.4 billion. The problem grows constantly worse with economic "recovery": every increase in U.S. economic activity increases imports; every increase in U.S. inflation undermines exports. Inflation is not an available solution.

Nixon's plan is more "realistic." He proposes to reduce government spending by eliminating those social programs which are supposed to contribute to the education, housing, medical care, or survival of the impoverished. He thus plans to limit the expansionary effect of government spending, bringing it as close to balance as he dares. His current budget proposes to retain a $12 billion deficit only in order to maintain American military supremacy and to ward off the threat of a complete collapse of the economy.*

What does all this mean for the future? It means simply that the "New Economics," like the "Old Economics," has not found a way to overcome the basic economic processes of capitalist society. Economic expansion throughout the history of capitalism has never been unlimited; each cycle has reached its limits and then contraction has set in. The attempt to stave this off with deficit spending has merely created "inflationary recession." We may expect it to continue indefinitely, with economic planners proving their mettle by sometimes increasing the inflation, sometimes the recession.

Short of full-scale depression, there is only one way the system can improve this situation. That is to raise profits by lowering labor costs. If it could do this, it would be able to expand profitably without raising prices. And it could regain international markets, both by the direct savings on labor costs and by modernizing the antiquated American industrial plant with the proceeds. To the extent that the system's economic problems in the coming few years are severe, it is bound to attempt this strategy.

Such a strategy is of course nothing new. The continuing expansion of the late

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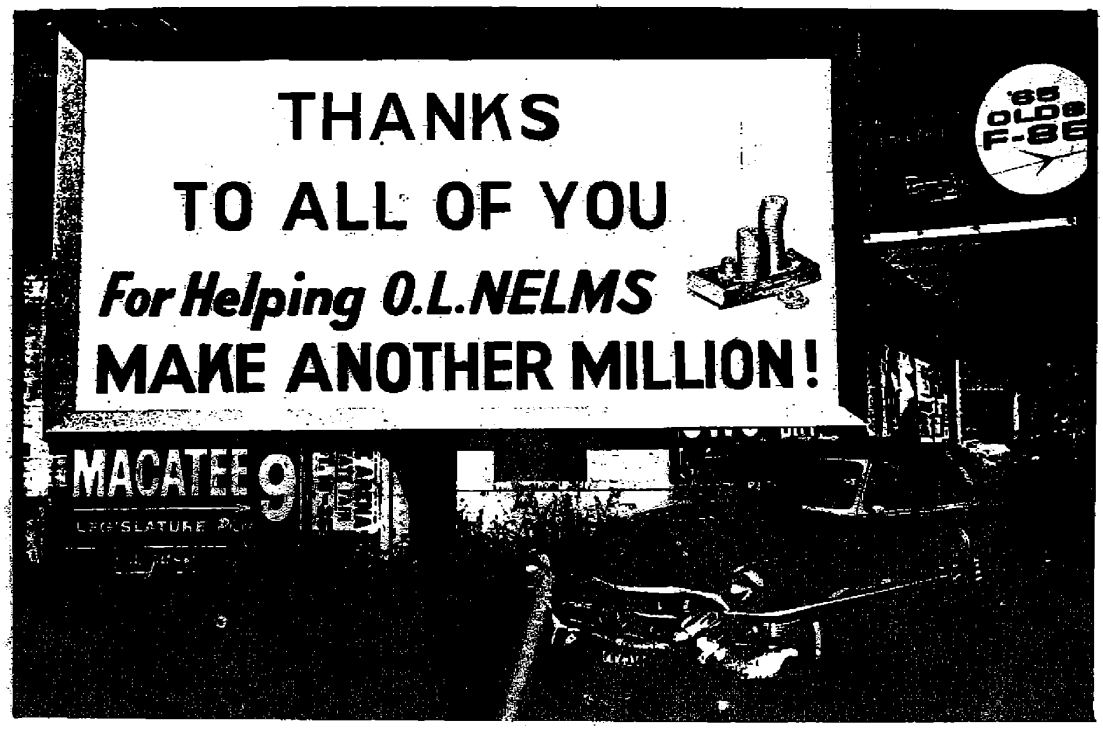
* The international face of Nixon's policy is to liquidate the American trade deficit by expanding trade with Communist countries and forcing American goods on other capitalist countries by means of tarriff and devaluation pressures. These approaches, however, have their limits. Russia and China are relatively poor countries with little but raw materials to exchange for American goods; in the short run at least they are likely to contribute little to overcoming America's trade deficit. The other capitalist countries have economic problems of their own which American policy, if successful, can only make worse, turning a national crisis into an international crisis.

1960's was in part made possible by the continuing decline in workers' real wages as substantial wage increases lagged behind even faster price increases. On takig office, Nixon provoked an economic contraction and rise in unemployment, explicitly in order to loosen the labor market and thereby bring down labor costs. When this approach proved inadequate, he applied government wage-price controls. Government officials explicitly stated that the central prupose of these was to control wages -- the price controls were merely to make the wage controls acceptable to the workers. Thus we see that the economic managers are capable of using either inflation or unemployment, not to mention direct controls, as a weapon to reduce workers' incomes.

At the same time, the government has tried to stimulate a national drive to increase "productivity." Of course, the primary reason for low American productivity is that American industry has been very backward in modernizing its productive plant. The vast modernization that is needed to remain internationally competitive is too extensive in most cases to carry out profitably. But productivity can also be raised simply by forcing workers to work harder and faster. The attempts to break down work rules and speed up production -- resulting in a number of strikes in the past year -- are the natural result.

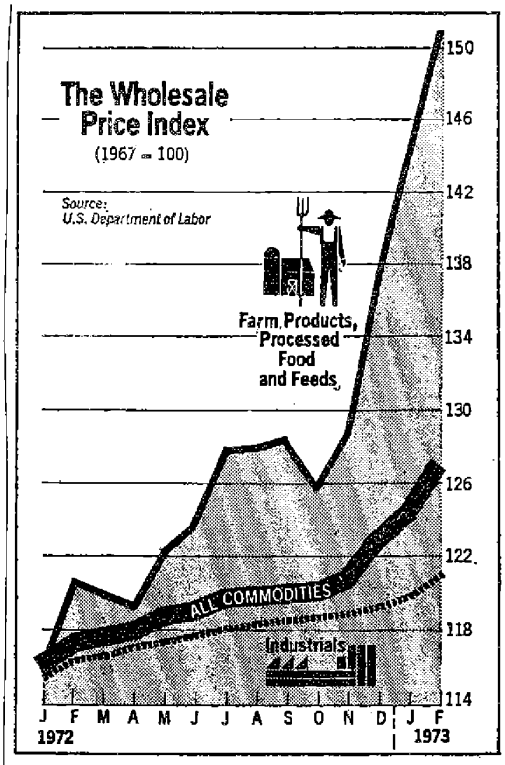
Unfortunately for the system, it has not been overwhelmingly successful so far in reducing workers' conditions. Productivity drives have had marginal effect. The contracts established by the last big round of wage negotiations in 1970 greatly exceeded the Nixon Administration guidelines, even though they came in the midst of a recession Nixon had stimulated precisely to hold down labor costs. The 1970 Teamster wildcat set the pattern for successful rank-and-file resistance to union-proposed settlements within the Nixon guidelines in the major industries. Direct wage controls had only marginal impact, an impact which would have been even less had they not been imposed in the pit of a recession. As the President's economic report pointed out, without previous deflationary moves, "the subsequent success of price and wage controls would have been impossible." In the end, their effectiveness was so marginal that Nixon has been willing to give them up in exchange for the political support he is receiving from George Meany.



Nixon dreams of an electoral alliance between the traditional Republican business constituency and the more affluent parts of the working class. (It is no no accident that he has been reading up on Disrali.) He aims especially for those older workers who are protected from unemployment by their accumulated seniority but who are threatened by inflation, tax increases, and the incursions of the impoverished. To the extent that he makes genuine concessions to organized labor, however, he will only make worse the overall economic problems he faces.

In short, the system's margins for manoeuver are growing steadily narrower. It needs to maintain military supremacy, fund social programs to allow urban survival, provide full employment, maintain price stability, permit a slow, steady rise in real wages, and steadily expand profits -- all at the same time. It can't. That is why politicians from George McGovern to Richard Nixon define the central issue as one of "national priorities." We may expect official politics for years ahead to be preoccupied with the question: which of the system's needs are not to be fulfilled?

If the system could fulfill all its needs, it would win universal support save for a handful of ideological malcontents. But it can't. This year's budget jettissoned all attempts to maintain urban life at the level of survival, despite the fact that a series of official commissions have repeatedly found that this problem threatens the life of the nation. Likewise it



jettissoned any attempt to bring unemployment much below current levels; the "neighborhood" of 4.5% is its most optimistic prediction. The probable result will be to generate discontent throughout society. Whether and how this discontent can make itself effective will be our central problem for the years ahead.

Eve Smith

Burns Suggests Cheese As Substitute for Meat

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20 (AP)—Dr. Arthur F. Burns, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, had some advice today for consumers worried about the rising cost of meat: Try cheese.

"I have nothing to suggest in the meantime except possibly that the American public would be just as well off if it spent less on meat and more n ocheese," Dr. Burns said.

The change might well be nutritionally beneficial, he said, and added: "On a purely voluntary basis, I think we would be just as well off if we had one meatless day a week."

Briton Urges Housewives To Try Eating Squirrels

LONDON (UPI) — Housewives complaining about the price of beef should try eating the common grey squirrel, said John Walker, a regional officer for the Country Landowner's Association.

"I don't see why people shouldn't eat squirrel," said Mr. Walker. "The taste is similar to hare. It doesn't have the earthy taste of rabbit and I much prefer it to chicken."

Meatless Days Urged

PROVIDENCE, R.I., March 8 (UPI)—To protest the soaring price of food, particular beef, the Rhode Island Senate last night passed a resolution asking the Governor to proclaim one day a week during April a "meatless day."

Meat for Needy Stops; Prices Called Too High

WASHINGTON, March 7 (UPI)—The Agriculture Department announced today that it had stopped buying canned luncheon meat for donation to about 2.6 million needy people because prices were too high.

A department spokesman said officials planned to make "very effort to maintain the nutritional adequacy" of the agency's commodity donation packages by substituting other protein food. The spokesman said it was too early to tell what substitute items might be purchased.

2 students eat dog food

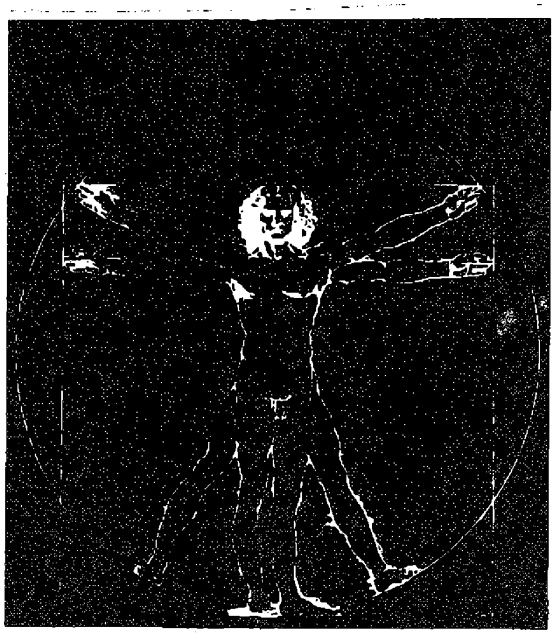
STILLWATER, Okla. — Two Oklahoma State University seniors tired of "95-cent-a-pound hamburger that just fried away" said yesterday they will eat nothing but dog food for a week in protest against rising food prices.

The canine ration will be no great shock to their systems. Terry Arnall and Jerry Dizmang have been working dog food into their diet for some time.

"It's getting to the point where a person cannot afford to eat," said Arnall, a 22-year-old stoneworker from Tulsa who is studying architecture. "I'm tired of paying 95 cents a pound for hamburger that just fries away. I'd rather pay $1.52 for a 10-pound sack of dog food."

"One night we made some real good beef stew out of 'Skippy' and baked potatoes and carrots," Arnall said. "For lunch the other day we took cheddar cheese soup and put some 'Purina' in it. 'Chuckwagon' is my favorite dry food.

"We've been eating 'Alpo' on toast, but it wasn't too good. We like 'Recipe' real well, and it's cheaper . . . We put a lot of garlic and a lot of salt on it and it really brings out the flavor."



A POST-AFFLUENCE CRITIQUE

Post-Scarcity Anarchism
by Murray Bookchin
Ramparts Press, 1971

reviewed by Jeremy Brecher

I

Throughout the 1960's, the themes of a return to nature, hostility to synthetics, anti-"consumerism," dissolution of sexual restrictions and roles, community and tribalism, internal exploration through drugs and other means, all became widespread among college and dropout youth, and were echoed by many young professionals -- all underpinned by a discontent with the established roles assigned them by presentday society. Their experimentation was made possible by their relative affluence and economic security. This put them in direct contrast with the generation which had been scarred by the economic rigors of the Great Depression, and to those of their contemporaries for whom labor was a prerequisite to survival.

By the end of the 1960's, the discontent remained, but much of the opportunity for experimentation had vanished. Students began to knuckle down for grades and eschewed political activity that might get them thrown out of school; dropouts, no longer able to live off the scraps of a booming economy, were forced to look for work and face the problems of any other workers. The romantic exuberance and sense of possibility that marked the 1960's became a matter of history.

Murray Bookchin's essays, published in Anarchos magazine from 1965 to 1970 and collected here, form one of the best products of that history. A careful look at them will reveal much about both the limits of radical thought in that period, and about those of its contributions which will still be useful in the grimmer times ahead.

Bookchin's central argument runs as follows. The last three decades, and especially the late 1950's, mark a technological turning point that negates all values and social programs of previous history, by making possible an era at once materially abundant and virtually free from toil. Young people, realizing this, have begun to adopt a whole new lifestyle, eliminating all the repressive attitudes and hierarchical institutions previously necessitated by scarcity and the need to work. A new vision of what society could be like is making the toil and renunciation of presentday society increasing-

ly intolerable to people of every class, especially the young. Riots, crime, and other forms of rebellion by the declasses who intuitively reject the values, forms, aspirations, and institutions of the established order become chronic. Simultaneously, the destruction of the natural environment by a hierarchical society threatens to destroy the entire "biotic pyramid" on which human life depends.

Bookchin looks to a massive popular revolution, somewhat like an extended version of the French upheaval of May, 1968, to emerge from these contradictions. Neighborhood assemblies, stimulated by dropout youth, would thereupon take over direction of society on a decentralized basis. People would leave the cities and factories to found autonomous, face-to-face communities in the countryside, which would become the new unit of society. They would be carefully adapted to the local ecology, and would utilize new, small-scale automated technology to provide for the needs of the community while eliminating toil. Human beings in the process would not only become free, but would become rounded members of a rounded society, fulfilling their desires in all realms of life.

Bookchin's argument superimposes a revolutionary dialectic on a number of themes that were "in the air" during the 1960's. These ideas were reflected in many of the best-sellers of the period. The idea that we live for the first time in a society where the problem of material scarcity has been largely overcome was popularized in J.K. Galbraith's The Affluent Society. The idea that in response, youth have developed a new lifestyle that is completely transforming society received wide circulation in Charles Reich's The Greening of America. The threat of ecological disaster has been increasingly borne in upon public consciousness since the publication of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring. Post-Scarcity Anarchism is an attempt to integrate this matrix of ideas into the tradition of left-wing anarchism.

There is much in this book that is valid, useful, and important. Bookchin argues persuasively that the various socialist and communist parties have become a major prop to hierarchical society, and that internally they promote both an institutional and a character structure that reproduces the worst aspects of the society they claim to oppose. He shows how limited the vision of radicals has generally been, and how they have failed to provide a real alternative to the present oppression of life. Equally important, he makes many proposals which at least will stimulate much discussion on the real possibilities of eliminating toil, domination, hierarchy, authority, and repression. This review is intended as a contribution to that discussion. It will focus on two of Bookchin's arguments: that an alternative society must be based on independent, face-to-face communities, and that we can no longer think about revolution in terms of the working class.

II

One of Bookchin's most important objectives in this book is to introduce an ecological dimension into social theory. He does this in "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought," an essay published in Anarchos before any other in this volume. Since it also gives one of his main arguments for a society of decentralized communities, it will serve as a useful starting point for our discussion of the latter.

Human development has often been seen as a steady increase of humanity's power to dominate nature. Yet this power is self-defeating if it destroys the very aspects of nature on which human life depends. Indeed, the idea of power over nature is inherently illusory, for no matter what we do, nature follows its own laws. Human progress actually lies in ever more perfect cooperation with nature, integrating its laws with our own purposes. To the extent that we ignore this -- and Bookchin shows that extent to be very great -- nature revenges itself upon us. If humanity is to survive, it must reverse direction and foster rather than destroy the natural systems on which it depends.

Bookchin argues that the way to do so is to eliminate cities, factories, and economic specialization and centralization, and replace them with "ecological communities," based on the natural resources of the locality concerned

Husbandry and intensive garden-style agriculture carefully adopted to the soils and contours of the last would replace the vast factory farms of today. Small factories which did not disturb the environment would provide for local needs without vast national industries. In all this Bookchin reflects the hostility toward large-scale production and desire to get "back to nature" which marked the youth culture of the 1960's.

Many of Bookchin's concrete proposals for improving humanity's balance with nature have merit, but he misses one basic aspect of the problem. He sensibly proposes that our objective be to "manage" (as contrasted with dominating) the biosphere. But this simply cannot be done by separate, isolated communities. One of the key principles of ecology -- indeed of all biology -- is that all biological systems have multiple levels of organization. For example, the organisms of a particular microenvironment are directly dependent on each other for food supply and regulation of population size. But at an entirely different level, all organisms are dependent on the transformation of carbon dioxide into oxygen by the entire plant population of the earth, and the reverse transformation of oxygen into carbon dioxide by the animals. The maintenance of a viable biosphere depends not only an a balanced local ecology, but on a total balance among the various elements of nature, including humanity as a whole. If, as Bookchin argues, we are to "manage" the biosphere, this cannot be done merely on the basis of separate, independent communities. Indeed, it requires coordination on a world-wide scale.

There is little reason to think that such communities would refrain from activities whose baneful ecological consequences would fall on others rather than themselves. What would prevent the continuation of the present situation, described by the Tom Leher song, in which

> "The breakfast garbage
> They dump in Troy
> You'll drink with lunch
> In Perth Amboy."

For in reality, no community can be an island, entire unto itself. There is no escaping from the consequences of other's actions. Indeed, this interdependence is the central lesson of ecology; Bookchin stresses it at some points, but ignores it where it contradicts his program. His proposals would reestablish the present situation, in which special groups can take actions which affect us, but over which we have no control.

This power of separate groups would also permeate economic relations. The natural resources of different areas are very uneven, so that the inevitable result of Bookchin's proposals would be a new stratification of rich and poor communities. This in turn would generate a new struggle among communities for a claim on resources or the social product. Bookchin relies on the improved morality of an anarchist society to prevent the resurgence of inequality. "Free men will not be greedy," he writes, "one liberated community will not try to dominate another because it has a potential monopoly of copper, computer "experts" will not try to enslave grease monkeys." It seems a slender reed on which to base a free and equal society, especially since a large proportion of communities would lack absolutely essential resources, and would be forced into either severe privation or plunder were the others less generous than Bookchin hopes. Interestingly, it is precisely the differences between resources and development in various regions which has led to the resurgence of conflict among the disperate nationalities of the "decentralized" economy of Yugoslavia.

Leaving aside such possible side effects, the question remains whether a society of independent communities is feasible at an acceptable standard of living. Any society must organize natural resources, labor, and technology so as to provide for its continuing life -- otherwise it ceases to exist. We have already pointed out some of the difficulties such a society would have with resources. We will next turn to the organization of labor, then to the problem of technology.

One critical problem with Bookchin's proposal lies in the interdependence of the production process. To make any product, it is necessary to have dozens or in many cases thousands of items that are the product of a previous production process. Indeed, Bookchin recognizes

that, for example, behind "a single yard of high quality electrical wiring lies a copper mine, the machinery needed to operate it, a plant for producing insulating material, a copper smelting and shaping complex, a transportation system for distributing the wiring -- and behind each of these complexes other mines, plants, machine shops and so forth." But hundreds of the objects which make up a civilized standard of life are created through processes just as complex and in many cases far more so -- after all, copper wire is a relatively simple product. The immense range of products needed for life cannot possibly be provided by Bookchin's face-to-face communities unless he is willing to replace toilets with privies, pianos with tom-toms, refrigeration with putrifaction, and surgical equipment with suffering and death. Further, such small communities would eliminate one of the greatest tools for reducing toil, since as Bookchin himself recognizes, "one of the most effective means of increasing output" is "the extending and sophisticating division of labor."

Of course, Bookchin argues that it is this very division which has made work so dehumanizing. His opposition to "workers councils" coordinating production over a wide area comes largely from his fear that they would perpetuate this condition. This I think is based on a misapprehension. There is little to criticize in Bookchin's desire that individuals have an opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities, including manufacturing, agriculture, and management -- in contrast to the mutilating specialization of labor today. But this does not require that the enormous range of productive functions that are exercized today must be abolished. That specialization can continue and even be extended, while the actual activity of the individual producers themselves becomes more and more varied. Indeed, Bookchin's proposal would eliminate much of the diversity he claims as his objective, since every community would be forced to concentrate its limited resources on producing the same basic necessities by a uniformly simple division of labor. The variety of modern life, its range of alternatives, is made possible by the greatly differentiated activities that make it up.

The real road to abolishing the mutilating aspects of the division of labor lies in a different direction. First, it requires a rational application of the division of labor to lower the necessary labor time of each individual as much as possible, so that life can become predominantly time that is free for activities conducted for their own sake, not out of need. Bookchin of course agrees with this in principle, but his program would make it impossible in practice because he ignores the economic realities on which such freedom must be based. Second, it requires complete reorganization of the work process and division of labor within the production units, so that the producers participate in and direct a complete process, rather than mindlessly carrying out one repeated task. Third, it requires an end to the identification of the individual with a single role in production, through the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities during any period, and to change areas of work in the course of a lifetime. These are exactly the kinds of possibilities opened up by workers self-management of production.

Such a pattern, incidentally, would greatly perfect the division of labor, at the same time that it suppressed that horror of all modern societies, capitalist or socialist, the labor market. No doubt there would be universal responsibility to put in a certain minimum number of hours of work. (Whether this would be enforced by law or merely by a universal understanding of its necessity will certainly be an important question.) Each productive unit would prepare a roster of its additional labor needs, and those looking for new work could essentially take their choice among the alternatives available. With the individual no longer molded to fit the job, not only would his own freedom increase, but the flexibility of the entire system.

Bookchin devotes an extended chapter to the technological developments he asserts make his small communities viable. Its tone is eminently practical, but its contents are in the tradition of science fiction -- taking genuine scientific advances and projecting them far beyond what actually exists. For example, one of the main problems with separate communities as we have seen is that

natural resources are not found evenly distributed throughout the earth, but rather in concentrated deposits. Bookchin proposes to solve this by extracting the traces of uranium, magnesium, zinc, copper, sulpher, chlorine, and other industrially-needed substances that exist in common rock, soil, and sea water. He argues that if they can be detected in the laboratory they may also be extracted for industry. We might argue with equal logic that since they can be produced atom by atom in the laboratory, they can be produced that way for industry.

Bookchin admits that such extraction would take so much energy as to make it impractical with conventional energy sources. He then suggests solar energy as the solution, since solar energy striking the earth is 3,000 times the annual energy consumption of humanity. Yet he holds up for his model as "one of the largest" examples of using solar energy for industry a solar furnace that will only melt 100 lbs. of metal at a time; by way of comparison, even the miniaturized electric pig-iron furnaces he recommends for decentralized communities produce 100 to 250 tons of iron a day, and would require corresponding quantities of power. His other proposals for energy sources are even more speculative: tidal dams, temperature differentials in bodies of water, and wind power, none of which are presently in use for industrial purposes.) There is no reason to doubt that solar energy can contribute to heating houses and running stoves, but there is equally little reason to believe that it can provide power at the level required even for decentralized industries, let alone for resource extraction processes for which even existing energy sources are insufficient. Bookchin takes his final dive into science fiction when he envisions "humans of the future" who will simply forget about the problems of technology and "stand at the end of a cybernated assembly line with baskets to cart the goods home."

Bookchin asks whether "a future society will be organized around technology or whether technology is now sufficiently malleable so that it can be organized around society." He points out that we can design a machine to do almost anything if we are willing to commit the resources; from this he draws the conclusion that we can develop the technological basis for any kind of society we want. Indeed, this is the key assumption that underlies his statement that we are on the threshold of a post-scarcity society. But the unfortunate fact is that, even with the full application of recent discoveries, limitations of technology will continue to exist, and will continue to put limits on the alternatives available to human society. Of course, further technological revolutions are not only possible but probable in the

Design for a Fourierist Community in Texas.

future, opening an ever wider set of possibilities. But if we are advocating a social revolution today, we must base our social alternative on possibilities which are real today, or our proposals will be taken as the science fiction they in fact are.

Bookchin's belief that modern technology allows small communities to be self-sufficient is in the end unconvincing. But his discussion of alternative technologies does contribute to an important process. We tend to think of the existing pattern of production (like the existing pattern of society) as a fixed structure, which we may perhaps modify but which we cannot fundimentally alter. One of the most important aspects of human freedom, however, is the power to change that structure, to use technology as we want. Bookchin shows us that we do in fact have that power, and that within limits we can restructure the technical base of society as we choose. The consciousness of this fact is essential to a free and rational society; its development is an important part of the revolutionary process. By ignoring its limits, Bookchin unfortunately makes the very real freedom we have appear a utopian dream.

Bookchin's emphasis on small, face-to-face communities grows in large part out of his desire to use technology to "carry man beyond the realm of freedom into the realm of life and desire." Indeed, one whole dimension of his thought is aimed at constructing a society which will realize such values as community, erotic fulfillment, well-roundedness, etc. Personally, I have my doubts about proposals for social reorganization that go "beyond the realm of freedom" and try to prescribe values for the future. If some people in a free society want to live in communes that is fine with me, but I see no reason to oppose someone who wants to be a hermit, who wants to live in a nuclear family, or who likes the anonymity an urban life allows. Similarly, I see every advantage in polymorphous sexuality, but I see no reason to reject the exclusive homo- or heterosexual or celibate. And while I myself enjoy a variety in my activities, I see no reason to discourage an individual from a single-minded pursuit of a particular calling in the name of "well-roundedness Bookchin uses ancient Greece to illustrate his ideas of community and all-round activity.* For all his talk about taking our poetry from the future, it seems he partakes of the classic fault of utopianism: projecting as the development of the future the "good" side of the past.

I am particularly bothered by his conception of people as citizens of a community, a concept he draws from ancient Athens and the radical democratic tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries. It is not clear what he means to imply by this, but it disturbs me somewhat, especially if he takes his Athenian precident seriously; for this "community," which he describes as "so successfully libertarian in character," among its powers "banished undesirable citizens" -- or, as we know in the case of Socratese, put them to death. Of course, Bookchin is not advocating this sort of thing, but anyone with personal experience with small communities knows that they can exercise tremendous power over the lives of their members. Indeed, his total community, with its complete control over every aspect of the individual's existence, has a disturbing totalitarian potential, whatever humanistic rhetoric of the rounded individual in the rounded community is wrapped around it. I wish Bookchin would devote as

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* It is a bit unnerving to hear him defend Athens against the charge of being "a slave economy which built its civilization and generous humanistic outlook on the backs of human chattels . . ." One might expect a revolutionary to wonder how Athenian democracy looked from the point of view of a slave.

much attention to this potential threat to freedom as he does to those which come from economic coordination.

Further, the concept of "citizen" seems to me to be exactly the kind of abstract identity Bookchin is so adamant in attacking when it comes to considering people as workers. I believe that in a free society, people will be neither "workers" nor "citizens," but simply people -- people who cooperate in a variety of ways to produce the kind of life they desire to lead. I think a society based on multiple networks for achieving a variety of objectives may well offer a greater protection for freedom than a total community, whose assembly holds total power over all facets of social life. Bookchin's approach at times seems closer to the "popular sovereignty" of democratic theory than to the combination of individual liberty and cooperative activity of the anarchist tradition at its best.

Bookchin is of course right in attacking those who would see the good society solely in terms of a reorganization of what is now considered "the economy." We need new concepts in which "economic planning" is no longer a separate sphere, but rather completely merged with "urban planning," "environmental planning," "residential planning," and the like. All of these involve ordering the material world through the organization of our own activity. Bookchin argues that this organization should aim to make peoples' dependence on nature perfectly transparent. I would add other goals that are equally important. One is to make human interdependence evident and understandable, so that people can both grasp social necessities as they arise, and can see their own power to affect social development. Another is to make the physical objects and processes we create -- buildings, machines, cities, roads, and whatever -- feel subject to our control because in fact they are subject to our control. All three objectives require social coordination on the widest possible scale as well as the freedom and power of individuals and small groups.

In his section on technology, Bookchin pulls back a bit from his

image of economically independent communities. "I do not claim that all of man's economic activities can be completely decentralized." "Depending upon the resources and uniqueness of regions, a rational, humanistic ballance could be struck between autarchy, industrial confederation, and a national division of labor." In the end he admits that there will be a "sizable category of material that can only be furnished by a nationwide system of distribution." Such distribution, he conceeds, would be possible "without the mediation of centralized bureaucratic institutions." This approach, so different from the main thrust of his book, is clearly the direction we must go in thinking about an alternative society, but he nowhere tries to deal with the problems of economic coordination this would seem to imply.

The key to combining such large- and medium-scale coordination with power at the base lies in distinguishing two distinct, though related issues. One is whether a special group -- the state, the planning bureaucracy, the leadership, the party, or even the workers' representatives in workers councils -- separate from the rest of us makes social decisions. The other is the size of the unit in which decision-making occurs. Bookchin and decentralists in general talk as if the second determined the first. But we know that small, face-to-face communities are no guarantee against control by a minority. In many parts of the world, small communities are ruled as private fiefdoms; elsewhere they are dominated by a small group of powerful elders, landlords, clan leaders, or the like. Nor is there proof that if any truly democratic organization is possible, it cannot be a large one.

The whole issue of scale of social organization has been obscured by this confusion. The alternatives have been posed as centralized planning by a separate group on the one hand, and independent self-managed local groups on the other. These have been the terms of the traditional debate between state socialists and decentralists.

If we start with the aim of establishing maximum power over our lives, we have to oppose any special group of decision-makers who are separate from us. But this tells us nothing about what scale of organization will maximize our power and our freedom.

One central aspect of this question is missed by advocates of both central planning and of autonomous communities, namely, that different levels of organization are appropriate to different kinds of problems. Let us take two historical examples which reveal the chaos caused by ignoring this principle. In the speech in which he announced Cuba's failure to reach its sugar production goals, Fidel Castro admitted the chaos that had resulted from the over-centralized control of the Cuban economy. Bricks would be made in one place, but no transportation would be arranged to take them to another site where workers were all ready to build houses and schools. Machines were made, but no tools or spare parts were available to repair them when they broke down. The attempt to manage everything from the center, far from leading to rational coordination, resulted in catastrophic inefficiency and disorder. However, local independence is no guarantee against this fate, as the first American railroads suggest. In the early stages of railroad construction in the U.S., a great many towns raised money and built their own railroads. The result was a totally unworkable system of short stretches of track following labyrinthine courses and almost impossible to coordinate in operation. Some of them did not even connect to anything. Only with the organization of large-scale companies was any kind of usable transportation system developed out of this chaos.

Fortunately, we are not, I believe, really faced with a choice between separate, independent communities on the one hand and central dictatorial authority on the other. For the model of various interacting levels of organization we have discussed above in connection with ecology can be applied to society as well.

A multi-leveled council system allows the various groups affected by different decisions to participate in making them. The level at which each type of decision is made will no doubt be arrived at by taking the existing pattern, modifying it experimentally, and evaluating the results. We can see a few principles, however, which are likely to affect the ultimate pattern. Resources which are not evenly distributed throughout the earth like copper or petroleum will require world-wide distribution and coordination. Products needed in small quantities but requiring complex activities will no doubt be produced on a national or international basis -- the world may well need only one plant producing left-handed scalpels. A national transportation system may well have to be planned nationally; but the exact local course of a road is of great importance to any community, and localities could have great power over it within the framework of a national plan. The archetecture and location of a building have so much impact locally that decisions about them might rest completely in local hands, even for a plant producing goods on a world-wide scale. The internal design and actual process of a plant or office affect no one so much as those who work there, and there is no reason they should not have complete power over it within the technical limitations of the task to be accomplished. Of course, such a system can never eliminate conflict among the various levels and interests -- but that is because it reflects so well all the various interests and needs of people, which at times come into conflict even in a context of abundance. The objective of such a system -- and the criterion by which decision-making levels would be allotted -- is to establish for ourselves as much control over the conditions of our lives as we can, and therefore as much freedom as possible.

This is the general approach of many of those who advocate a society based on "workers' councils," and we must digress for a moment to discuss

Bookchin's objections to such a system as anything more than a transitional form. We may start with his useful critique of the type of Soviet organization that emerged in Russia in the revolution of 1917. These were bodies of delegates elected by groups of workers, peasants, and soldiers, which initially coordinated the revolutionary struggle and, after the October revolution, became the new government. Their national congresses, as Bookchin points out, became increasingly unrepresentative bodies, as local soviets elected regional representatives who in turn elected national representatives. Actual power passed first from an unwieldy national congress of over 1,000 delegates, to an executive committee of 200 to 300, and finally to the Council of People's Commissars -- the Bolshevik cabinet -- as sessions of the larger groups became more infrequent and pro forma.

Bookchin offers several explanations for this process. First, it was encouraged by the hierarchical structure of the soviets themselves; presumably he is here referring to their indirect elections and the fact that (as in parliamentary democracy) orders flowed down from the top, justified by the representative nature attributed to the regime. Second, the "social roots" of the Soviets were too limited for a "true popular democracy." By this, Bookchin seems to mean that the Russian people were not committed to ruling themselves. He says that the military battalions which went over to the revolution were too unstable, the new Red Army too well controlled by the Bolsheviks, the regular military too politically inert, and the peasant villages too preoccupied with local concerns to keep the soviets alive.

So far his analysis seems acceptable. The problem comes when he tries to explain why the industrial workers, who were left as the main base of the Soviets, were unable to resist the establishment of central Bolshevik authority. Bookchin argues that the basic weakness lay in the nature of the factory itself. The social power of a particular factory is limited since it is dependent for its existence on other factories and sources of raw material. According to Bookchin, this makes it impossible for power to stay at the base. The conclusion is central for all Bookchin's thought: a revolution based on workers organized at the point of production "creates the conditions for a centralized, hierarchical political structure."

What Bookchin fails to see is that it is precisely this interdependence which makes workplaces powerful. In the early days of the revolution, factories were taken over by factory committees of the workers, which were moving rapidly toward their own direct coordination of production. (For a full, documented discussion of this process, see Bolsheviks and Workers Control by Maurice Brinton, published by Solidarity and available from Root & Branch.) The railway workers, who represented the essence of the interrelation of production, provide one important example. The day after the Bolshevik seizure of power, the "All-Russian Executive Committee of Railwaymen," a union E.H. Carr describes as "a mammoth factory committee exercizing 'workers' control'" in running the railways, announced its opposition to "the seizure of power by any one political party" and threatened a general strike. Its power was sufficient to force the Bolsheviks to reverse themselves and include the Left Social-Revolutionaries in the Soviet government. The Bolsheviks thereupon tried to undermine their position by creating a rival organization and giving it the authority to run the railroads, backed by state power. Once the railway workers were thus split, the Bolsheviks decreed "dictatorial powers in matters relating to railway transport." Yet in August, 1920, political opposition by the railway workers was still so strong -- and so crippling to the economy -- that Trotsky was only able to suppress it through martial law and the summary ousting of their leaders. It was precisely to break this rising power of the workers at the workplace that the Bolsheviks moved against the factory committees. They succeeded in crushing them not because of some inherently centralist tendency of industry, but because of total disorganization caused by the war, because the Russian working class represented only a miniscule part of the population, and because a large proportion of workers were willing to accept Bolshevik rule.

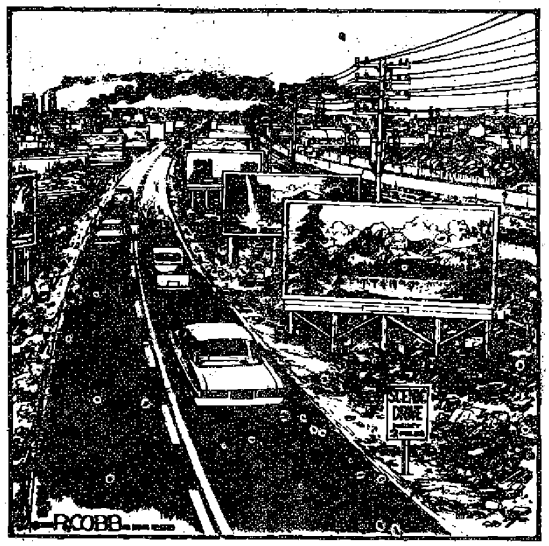
Bookchin concedes that in the Spanish revolution, "working-class self-management suceeded." This he attributes to the conscious effort of the anarcho-syndicalist union, the C.N.T., to limit the tendency toward centralization, and the continuous power exercised by local assemblies over their representatives and delegates. The higher bodies of the C.N.T. functioned essentially as coordinating organs, and every individual, he states, felt personally responsible and personally influential in its policies and activities. This highly idealized view of events in Spain contradicts Bookchin's argument that factories imply a national centralization of power.

Indeed, this argument doesn't hold water, unless any national coordination is considered as centralization. But this is just what Bookchin does. He contrasts sharply what he terms "mediated" and "unmediated" forms of social relations. Face-to-face relations are unmediated and good; all others are mediated and bad. Thus for Bookchin, our enemy is not merely any social power we do not control; it is any form of social organization too large to meet face-to-face. Even a system coordinated by delegates who were nothing more than messengers for face-to-face groups would be "mediated" and therefore bad.

Bookchin concedes that communities cannot be small enough to meet face-to-face and yet large enough to be economically autarchic at a civilized standard of living. Coordination among groups too large to meet face -to-face -- mediated relationships in Bookchin's terms -- are inevitable unless we return to the primitive standard of living advocated by those anti-technologists Bookchin has elsewhere stigmatized as "paleolithic food-gatherers." The problem is how those at the base can keep the coordination process in their own hands -- for unless they do the coordinating themselves, someone else surely will, and thus seize social power. Bookchin leaves the door dangerously open for those who would argue that, since coordination is necessary, a central bureaucracy or state to conduct it is necessary too. Libertarians would do better to focus their attention on how this coordination can be conducted from below, rather than attacking it altogether.

Indeed, Bookchin has modified an earlier version of one essay to admit that such coordinating councils need not become focusses of power, if they are "limited by direct relationships" of the face-to-face group, "leaving policy decisions to the latter." In discussing the specialized committees and boards in a neighborhood, Bookchin suggests the means by which this can be done. "They must be answerable at every point to the assembly; they and their work must be under continual review by the assembly; and finally, their members must be subject to immediate recall by the assembly." It is precisely by such principles that "mediated" coordinating organs too can function without becoming central bureaucratic authorities.

In addition to multiple levels of organization, one other principle of biological and other systems is essential for conceiving a society with coordination but no authority, the principle of feedback. In the classical model of centralized socialist planning, a group of Planners sits around a table and draws up the Plan, listing everything that is to be produced for the next five or howevermany years. Such planning is, as Bookchin would argue, inherently centralist, bureaucratic, and authoritarian; experience has shown that it is also hideously inefficient, producing anarchy in the



most derogatory sense. But there are other types of systems which provide for the disperate needs of their sub-units by a very different type of coordination -- mutual regulation through feedback. The systems of computerized inventory control used by large companies today -- regulating hundreds of stores and plants and thousands of products -- illustrate the essential simplicity of this approach. In one system, for example, a punch-card accompanies each item produced. When that item is sold, the card is returned to a central computer, which adds up the needs of all the stores for replacement of each product. This information is then conveyed to the various plants, which expand or contract their output accordingly. Their own inventory -- the parts and material they need for their work -- is coordinated with their suppliers in exactly the same manner. This information network allows the various factories and stores to coordinate their activities, maintaining a stable level of needed materials, without any one of them holding general authority over the others.

We can envision the entire productive process of a socialist society as a system designed to provide a steady flow of those things individuals and sub-units need and want. Economic coordination at any given level of production requires little more than adjusting the level of flow of the various products, which can be done simply by feeding back information on needs and comparing them with present flow. A constant monitoring of inventory fluctuation provides an additional check.

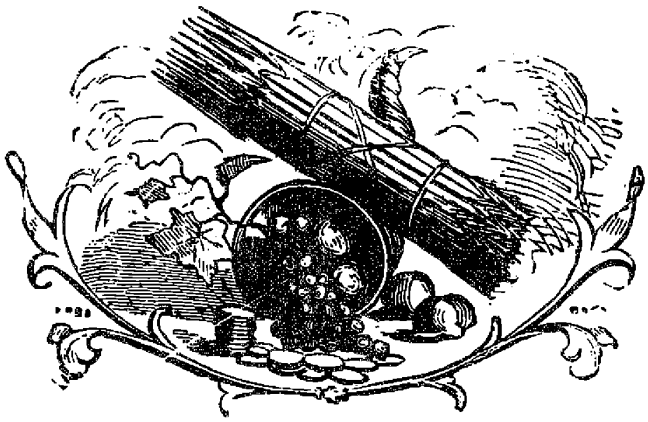
Of course, the process becomes more complex when a change in the system is desired -- for example a new product or process, a change in location, a combination or subdivision of units, or whatever. Before making changes in the production process, people would no doubt try to simulate their effects, using computerized models of the entire economy to test their ramifications. With the economy itself run on a continuous feedback principle, the economic effects of any proposed change would be relatively easy to trace. All those affected by the change could thereby be assured of an opportunity to participate in deciding on it -- after their own discussion and vote -- through mandated representatives. Then the change could be tried experimentally, its effects on the entire system carefully monitored, and the necessary adjustments made throughout. By such an approach it is possible to have a coordinated economy with continuous planning but no Central Plan or Plan Authority.

III

Bookchin expresses one of the most characteristic themes of 1960's radicalism, that the working class is a conservative supporter of the existing society, while the "middle class" is so psychologically manipulated and oppressed that it is potentially revolutionary. "The proletariat" writes Bookchin, "instead of developing into a revolutionary class within the womb of capitalism, turns out to be an organ within the body of bourgeois society." On the other hand, "Capitalism, far from affording 'privileges' to the middle classes, tends to degrade them more abjectly than any other stratum in society . . . there is nothing more oppressive than 'privilege' today, for the deepest recesses of the 'privileged' man's psyche are fair game for exploitation and domination."*

Of course, Bookchin's point of view reflects the empirical facts of the time in which it was written. During the

* It seems that no one is so unhappy as the poor little rich kid. The solution to the misery of the privileged, however, can be found without resort to revolution if Bookchin is correct. All that is needed is to enlighten the unprivileged workers about the miseries of the affluent, and I confidently predict that streams of workers will step forward of their own free will to take on themselves the burden of these false "privileges," relieving the middle classes of their pain and allowing them to occupy the workers' place in the factory, secure in that happy organ of bourgeois society. In their new-found leisure and misery, the workers might then even experience the "exploitation and domination" of their psyches which would make them at long last ripe for revolution.



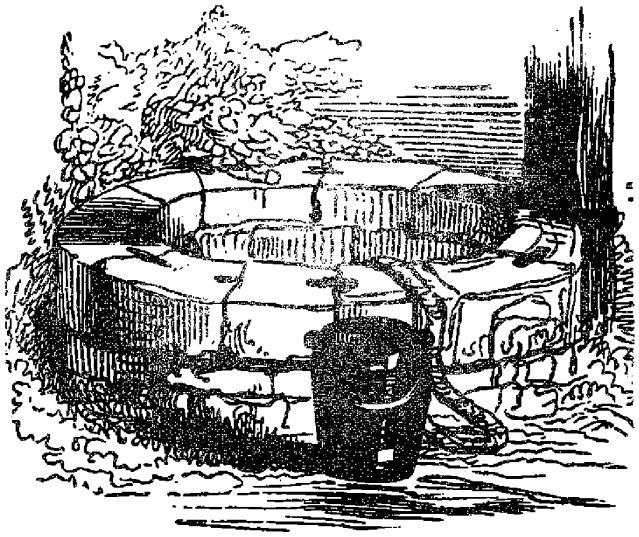
1960's, affluent youth were in visible revolt; industrial workers by and large were not. But it is a great mistake to extrapolate too directly from this kind of short-range alignment of social forces to the more fundimental power conflicts that come out in a genuinely revolutionary struggle. Two years before the Russian revolution aristocrats were conspiring to assasinate top members of the government while workers were threatening to lynch Bolsheviks in the shops for their stand against the War. If the radical movement of middle-class youth in the 1960's cannot be dismissed as merely petty-bourgeois dilettantism, neither can it now be seen as a serious revolutionary movement determined to overthrow capitalism and all hierarchy. Perhaps it can best be seen as the revolt of a segment of society resisting its reduction from free professionals to hired workers if in the process it made a valuable challenge to the values of capitalist society, it hardly possessed the understanding, the commitment, and above all the social power to reverse that proletarianization, let alone eliminate its source. The post-1968 recession has not made this stratum any happier with their lot, but it is successfully forcing them to accept it. We may expect that this stratum will not revolt again until they realize that they too are condemned to a life of toil, and can only escape it by eliminating any separate group that would control and exploit the labor of others. At that point they will see their interests as identical with those of the rest of the working class.

Bookchin's conception of the working class rests on three bases. One is the undoubted fact that working class struggle was at a low ebb during the years in which the current generation grew up -- roughly 1950 to 1965, years also marked by the relative stabilization of the capitalist economy. Social theorists of the "end of ideology" school interpreted this as indicating a fundimental change in Western society. Many radicals, notably C. Wright Mills and Herbert Marcuse, while attacking the "end of ideology" rhetoric, accepted the premise that the working class was no longer a potentially revolutionary force in economically developed societies. This assumption dominated the thinking of the New Left until roughly the time of the May, 1968 general strike in France. Since that time, the assumption has been largely shattered by the resurgence of working class revolt and direct action not only in France but in Italy, England, Chechoslovakia, Poland, and to a lesser extent the U.S. and other countries. We can now see this theory in historical context. Every period of capitalist expansion and relative quiescence of the class struggle has produced theories of the same sort, which have held wide public acceptance until their factual basis crumbled under their feet. We are witnessing another such collapse today.

The second base of Bookchin's attitude echoes another idea popularized by the "end of ideology" school, the theory of working class "authoritarianism." Through the 1950's, many sociologists and historians argued that the conditions of working class life made workers a group with an authoritarian personality structure, prone to following fascistic leaders and trampling on liberty. Bookchin argues that "our enemies" include an outlook supported by "the worker dominated by the factory hierarchy, by the industrial routine, and by the work ethic." He views the worker as someone who must shed "his work ethic, his character-structure derived from industrial discipline, his respect for hierarchy, his obedience to leaders, his consumerism, his vestiges of puritanism." This statement expresses perfectly the moral contempt with which the New Left generally regarded workers, and goes far to explain why

it had so little appeal to them. The New Left hated and feared the working class, and considered it an enemy. Such self-righteousness is hardly becoming in radical students whom capitalism provides the privilege of living off the labor of others, pursuing a life relatively free from the factory hierarchy, industrial routine, and, in short, the need to sell their labor. Workers, like others, accept the exercise of power over them in many areas of life. They share many of the racist and sexist attitudes of our society. But anyone who thinks workers like the factory hierarchy or the industrial routine has ample opportunity to learn otherwise by lining up at the nearest factory employment line.

We come to the third base of Bookchin's argument when he chooses to "flatly deny" that "workers are driven by their interests as workers to revolutionary measures against hierarchical society." Unless Bookchin is using "interests as workers" in some peculiar and idiosyncratic manner*, this statement is, I believe, false. Anyone familiar with the day-to-day conflict with authority of workers in a plant or office, let alone the history of spontaneous rebellions against it in strikes, occupations, and attempts to establish self-management, would surely be skeptical of Bookchin's assertion. Workers as workers have an interest in eliminating the power of anyone who can direct and exploit their labor; for only by eliminating that power can they gain control of their own time and their own share of social resources. The difference between workers -- those who have no share in society's means of production -- and other classes who do, is that workers have no means of escape from the power of authority except to eliminate that authority. In this their interests are far more opposed to hierarchy than the affluent youth Bookchin celebrates, who can achieve a life of relative freedom by buying a piece of land in the country or living without having to work full-time in the city -- all on the basis of parental subsidy, educational advantage, personal connections, and other forms of privilege. Of course, such people may favor revolution. (In the eyes of many working class people this is only another aspect of their privileged position; affluent youth needn't worry about losing their jobs, if they get arrested they can hire fancy lawyers who get them off, and they have funds and contacts to travel around the country accumulating prestige and attracting publicity -- not to mention all-expenses paid visits to Hanoi.) Revolution is undoubtedly in their interest in as much as it would create a better life for most of them as people. But un-



* Perhaps he means "interests as workers" as contrasted with "interests as human beings." Perhaps he means that the interests in freedom, plentiful goods and services, self-direction, etc., are "interests as humans" rather than "interests as workers." But then all interests would be "interests as humans" and the concept of "interests of members of a class" would be meaningless. I would maintain, however, that the concept of the common interests of a class is extremely useful, since groups of individuals do in fact have common interests growing out of a common situation in society which differs from that of other groups. Their interests are of course "human" in that they are the interests of human beings -- but decidedly not in the sense that they are the interests of all human beings.

like the working class, they are not faced with revolution as the only alternative to a daily life of exhausting and brutalizing labor under the total domination of the employer, with an income just enough to keep going, punctuated by periods of unemployment without even this. If that is not enough for Bookchin to give people an interest in abolishing hierarchical control of their lives, I wonder what is.

There is one other aspect of the situation of the working class that deserves mention. In a society of independent owners of productive property, an individual naturally views the road to freedom as gaining sufficient private property to support himself. In a modern economy, however, most work is done collectively, indeed, is part of an overall collaboration of the entire working class. A worker can hardly conceive the basis of his freedom as lying in his individual ownership of his own stretch of the assembly line. Thus the only road to freedom for the working class is collective rather than individual ownership of the means of production. The problem of moving from individual to collective solutions to our problems -- the critical need to surpass economic individualism -- Bookchin ignores. It is precisely the situation of the workers as a class which provides the basis of a solution to this problem. It is this, not as Bookchin implies the regimentation of the capitalist factory, which made Marx see the working class as the basis of an alternative, collective society.*

Certain other Bookchin distortions of Marx cannot pass without comment:

According to Bookchin, Marx believed that after the revolution, basic social decisions would be left to "a state power . . . a coercive body, established above society." But this interpretation is a complete distortion of Marx, who held that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was nothing but the armed working population itself. (Marx undoubtedly distorted the anarchist position just as unfairly in his attacks on them.) Marx's writings on the Paris Commune and his Critique of the Gotha Program certainly do not call for a state "established above society." The worst we can say is that he failed to separate himself completely from the earlier tradition of revolutionary democracy represented by the Jacobins, although his evolution was steadily away from this approach. The most we can indict him for is failing to recognize in advance the danger of a state "above society" developing out of the revolutionary process, and thus failing to preclude the development of a state socialism established in his name. But although he failed to preclude the state socialism of today, it is simply false to assert that this was what he had in mind.

Bookchin repeatedly states that Marx's thought is obsolete because we now live in an era of potential abundance and leisure, while in his own time Marx could only conceive of a world of scarcity and want, even under socialism. But at the core of Marx's view of modern history was his understanding of the tremendous and continuing growth of productivity and the potential it gave for the drastic reduction of impoverishment and toil. While Marx did not of course predict the specific technological developments of the past 100 years, he made

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* Bookchin makes a telling critique of the socialist movement; it is unfortunate that he has perpetuated the traditional anarchist habit of holding Marx responsible for the sins of all those who would speak in his name. This is exactly as fair as the traditional Marxist habit of portraying anarchism as nothing but the irrational bomb throwing occasionally perpetrated in its name. The entire revolutionary movement has been weakened for a century by the irresponsibility of both sides in this debate; both have systematically distorted each others' positions. Historical experience, far from vindicating either party, has shown that each was weakest precisely where it failed to learn from the other. Surely we can now foregoe the sterile polemics and synthesize the insights of both traditions.

the general trend his most basic assumption. Indeed, Bookchin even cites a statement by Marx and Engels showing they believed communist society would be based on the overcoming of scarcity. A development of the productive forces, they wrote, is necessary for a communist society, "because without it want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced." This is hardly the statement of theorists unable to see beyond the realm of scarcity! The fact that for Marx the realm of freedom had yet to be achieved by no means implies that he could not see its possibility; even Bookchin admits that we still are only on the threshold of post-scarcity. Bookchin gives the coup de grace to his own argument when he admits that the revolution in industrial technology of Marx's own time meant "to the revolutionary theorist that for the first time in history he could anchor his dream of a liberatory society in the visible prospect of material abundance and increased leisure for the mass of humanity."

Bookchin's discussion of Marx's definition of the proletariat is too

obscure even to be declared definitively false. He starts by offering to dispose of the notion that for Marx "anyone is a 'proletarian' who has nothing to sell but his labor power." But he immediately adds that "Marx defined the proletariat in these terms." He then states that for Marx the proletariat developed to its most advanced form in the industrial proletariat. He concludes his case by stating that Marx preferred the more disciplined German workers to those in the Parisian luxury trades. It seems to me we can "dispose of" Bookchin's argument by saying that for Marx, "anyone is a 'proletarian' who has nothing to sell but his labor power." Of course the working class has "developed," both before Marx's day and after, along with the development of the capitalist economy; today it includes the overwhelming majority of the population. But that development, unfortunately, has hardly made the great majority who have nothing to sell but their labor power cease to be workers.

I am not making these points to defend Marxism as holy writ. There is enough to criticize in what Marx said, however, without attacking him for things he didn't say.

Bookchin to his credit specifically recognizes that no revolution is possible in America without the participation of the working class. But the very way in which he analyzes the polarization of society makes that participation less likely, and ends reenforcement to those who identify the working class as an enemy of the revolution. For instance, I once heard Tom Hayden, perhaps the closest we have to a prototype of '60's radicals, say in private that the revolution would consist of violent struggle by youths, blacks, and other minorities against the rest of society, including the mainstream working class; the latter he thought might possibly come over, but only after violence was used against it. This state of mind and its disasterous implications are caught brilliantly in Marge Percy's recent novel, Dance the Eagle to Sleep. In it she projects

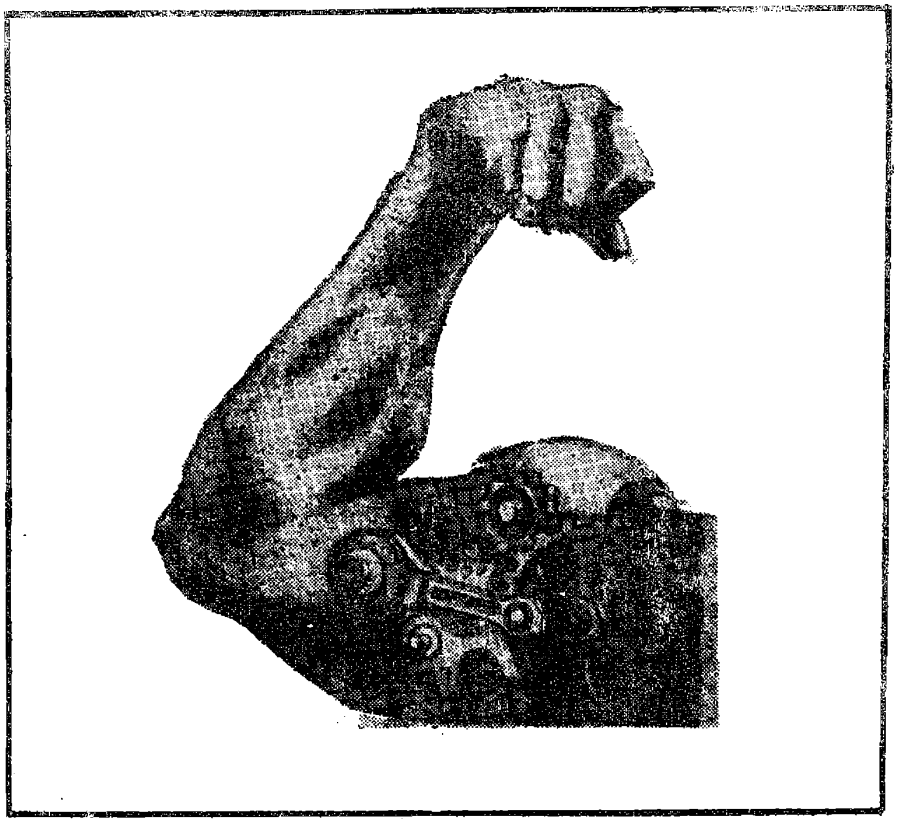
an uprising of alienated youth which breaks out in Bookchin's beloved Lower East Side and spreads through the country, only to be exterminated by planes and tanks with the support of the majority of the population. The polarization advocated by many '60's radicals, if pushed to the point of revolution, could only have led to such a catastrophe. For as Percy's leader recognized in despair at the end, "He had only thought to get the kids out of the system . . . Yet you could not win a violent revolution in the center of the empire with rifles against tanks and planes, if the Army would fight against you. You could not win with an isolated minority." The collapse of the radical movement of the 1960's has at least averted such a holocaust. If a successful revolution ever occurs, it will be based on the problems and experiences of the great majority who make up the working class, not of those whose privileged position already allows them to simulate "post-scarcity." The contribution of the latter is at best prophetic.

The underlying problem with Bookchin's approach to class is that he substitutes values for social relationships. Thus he writes, "All who live in bourgeois society have 'bourgeois roots,' be they workers or students, young or old, black people or white. How much of a bourgeois one becomes depends exclusively upon what one accepts from bourgeois society. If young people reject consumerism, the work ethic, hierarchy, and authority, they are more 'proletarian' than the proletariat . . . ." This view of social questions as essentially about attitudes or values pervaded the radicalism of the 1960's.* Bookchin considers it a great advance, which should allow us to "inter the threadbare elements of socialist ideology together with the archaic past from which they derive." In fact, it is no advance at all, but a retreat to the kind of idealism in which ideas and values are conceived as the motive force of history, with social institutions and attitudes their outward manifestation. It simply ignores the very real differences in life situations different classes face. How much of a bourgeois one is depends not on one's lifestyle but on the extent to which one is in a position to exploit the labor of others or rather must oneself be exploited; a millionaire-hippy is not one whit less bourgeois for all his contempt for the work ethic, hierarchy, and authority; nor can workers become bourgeois by putting on costume jewelry modelled on the real stuff of the rich.

It is no surprise that with such an approach, Bookchin revives the utopian socialism of the 19th century, complete with ideal communities founded in the wilderness with the support of well-intentioned people of all classes on the basis of a vision of a perfect society from which all would gain. Bookchin writes of the 19th century that "the realm of necessity was brutally present; it could not be conjured away by mere theory and speculation." The same, unfortunately, remains true today. Bookchin's contribution is in reminding us that we possess the means to conquer that situation, in suggesting ways to do so, and above all in raising questions about alternatives to the present set-up which have too long remained unasked.

* It also curiously parallels Lenin's view that the working class is unable to fight for anything beyond gains within capitalism, unless a revolutionary consciousness is brought to it by the more enlightened middle class revolutionaries, who have rejected middle class society and joined the self-proclaimed bearers of "revolutionary consciousness."

LISTEN MARXIST: A REPLY



I take Jeremy Brecher to be a decent, intelligent, and honest guy whom I know personally and like very much. Hence when Jeremy comes out with a 37-page (typescript) review of my book, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, that misinterprets important aspects of the book, I must work with the assumption that he wears blinders that restrict his vision and is burdened by prejudgements that make it difficult for him to evaluate its contents. The review is one of those shot-gun blasts that scatters pellets all over the place. To pick out each pellet and examine it carefully would require a work at least five times the size of Jeremy's, which time (and I suspect, space) make prohibitive. So I shall have to content myself with a critical overall evaluation of the review and cite a few examples of Jeremy's misinterpretations.

The review in high Marxist fashion begins with an attempt to locate the "social origins" of my outlook -- the youth revolt and the counter-culture of the sixties -- which for Jeremy is already pretty much of a "dead dog." "By the end of the 1960's," we are told, "the discontent remained, but much of the opportunity for experimentation vanished. Students began to knuckle down for grades and eschewed political activities that might get them thrown out of school; dropouts, no longer able to live off the scraps of a booming economy, were forced to look for work and face the problems of any other workers. The romantic exuberance and sense of possibility that marked the 1960's became a matter of history."

This shallow treatment of what is happening today among students and dropouts could easily be culled from Time and Life articles on the demise of the sixties. I would hate to explode Jeremy's illusions, but the majority of students even in the sixties were always looking for good grades and "eschewed political activity that might get them thrown out of school." As to the radical minority of students who fomented most of the activity on the camp-

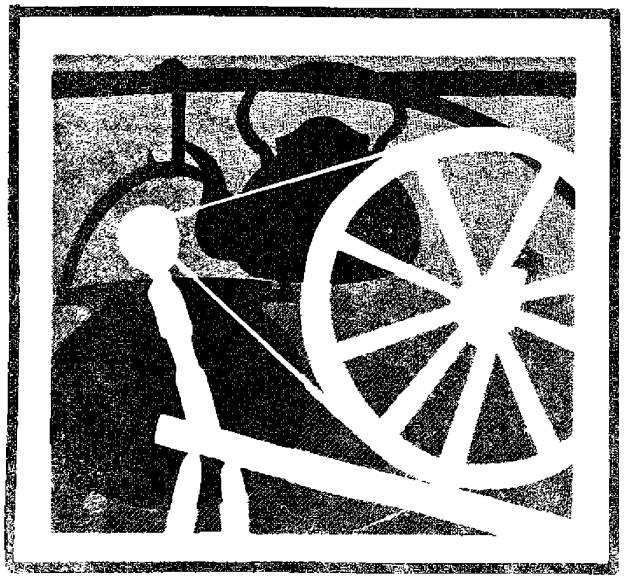
uses, the "romantic exuberence and sense of possibility" they created was built on a suicidal, arrogant polarization politics that, in turn, was based on the myth that the "revolution" was a year or two away. That the majority of students did not fall for this political insanity is much to their credit. That many radical students have now returned to school to do some serious thinking about the role of campuses, education, and theory generally after a career of guilting students with the sickening insult that "students are shit" is also creditable. What the seventies have learned from the "radical" politics of the sixties is that the revolution is not around the corner with each trashing of an ROTC building and that some serious theory had better be learned -- whether on campuses or off them -- to deal with the decades-long development that lies ahead. What should be regarded as a very important aspect of a larger development, one which opens new potentialities for the future, is treated by Jeremy as the demise of a period and development he never understood in the first place.

As to dropout youth, I would remind Jeremy that the counterculture as a whole has been a much more complex development than he cares to think. Having lived it to a large extent, I can remember when it survived during the mid-sixties on a diet of candy bars (literally!) in two small urban enclaves (N.Y.'s Lower Eastside and San Francisco's Haight district), when it shared a rabidly anti-technological outlook, and when it lived in an ambience of apolitical adolescent irresponsibility. Since then, I've seen it spread all over the country, graduate from candy bars to organic foods and farming, turn from political indifference to almost impatient political action, replace its anti-technological attitude by a serious ecotechnological one, learn skills that would have amazed its middle-class progenitors, increasingly acquire a new sense of responsibility, maturity, and self-respect, and most importantly, raise problems of subjective relationships that far and away overshadow the anemic, economistic "class consciousness" fostered by the Marxian sects with such notable lack of success for over a half century among the proletariat. For once, these dropouts have posed the problems of self-management and self-activity so intrinsic to a communist consciousness not merely as issues of "management" and "activity" but of the new self that could make management and activity existentially and humanly meaningful. I have emphasized repeatedly that the forging of this new self that will be capable of self-management and self-activity occurs very unevenly and cannot be fully actualized under conditions of unfreedom. But to struggle for the development of this new self, and to attempt to raise the subjective issues it must deal with, are vitally important even in advance of the communist revolution we all seek -- or else the revolution will never be a communist one. In raising the issues of a new self and in struggling to actualize it, the counter-culture stands head and shoulders over the arid sects of the Marxian "left" whose "class consciousness" has never left the factory domain at best or the ballot box at worst. And I deeply resent their denunciatory attitude toward a development that they never anticipated, that they preyed on like vultures to fill the ranks of their demonstrations and cadres, and on whose presumed "grave" they now gleefully dance.

I'm not much concerned with whether Post-Scarcity Anarchism is a "product" or a dialectical superimposition "on a number of themes that were 'in the air' during the 1960's" (as Jeremy puts it) or an anticipation of many of the counterculture's essential elements. I would simply remind Jeremy that I was writing on ecology, post-scarcity, and utopian problems of social reconstruction and decentralization in the early 1950's in Contemporary Issues, long before such "themes" were taken up by Galbraith, Reich, and Carson. The publication of my book, Our Synthetic Environment, which already deals with all the issues raised by "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought" precedes Silent Spring by half a year. What seriously concerns me is the fact that the student movement and the counterculture of the sixties fell on the Marxist sects (including the Council Communists) like

a ton of bricks and left them completely bewildered. Root and Branch has not been around long enough for me to assess the degree to which it shares in the poverty of this attitude. But I feel it shares the economistic bias of most Marxian groups and what I have to say applies at least partly to it as to other Marxian groups.

The Marxists of the early sixties never expected white middle-class suburban kids, "overgorged" by "affluence," to do precisely what they had predicted workers would do owing to "immiseration" and "pauperization." And I'll be damned if they know what to do with it yet, all their re-interpretations of Marx's theory of alienation notwithstanding. Saddled with a perspective that was not news in 1848, they were "prepared" for a growing unemployed reserve army, for the "relative" pauperization of the proletariat, for a "chronic economic crisis" (as we called it in the thirties), for an increasingly politicized and revolutionary proletariat, all of which was to culminate in a proletarian revolution. This is no mere "vulgarization" of Marxism; it formed the foundations of proletarian socialism, an epochal perspective that cannot be erased with incidental quotations from Marx's "early" or "middle" writings. With the sixties, the Marxists found not factory workers but rather moderately well-to-do "privileged" kids moving into rebellion



on a wide cultural, humanistic, and even personalistic front against all aspects of the established system -- not merely against class society but hierarchical society; not merely against economic exploitation, but domination in every form; not merely for happiness but for pleasure; not merely for "social justice" but for freedom on a multidimensional scale (women's liberation, sexual liberation, children's liberation, control from below in every phase of life, communal living, mutual aid, counterinstitutions to the existing ones, etc., as well as economic and social liberation.) Where Marxism had led its disciples to expect a social upheaval to stem primarily from the struggle of wage labor against capital motivated by the material immiseration of the proletariat, they found themselves face-to-face with a rebellious movement of "petty bourgeois" youth who had tasted of the "American Dream" and rejected it as odious. The truth must be stated: every Marxist group, to my knowledge, alternately castigated this movement, downgraded it with Olympian arrogance, later parasitized and divided it, and now is trying to bury it. First, the movement was condemned as "petty bourgeois hedonosm" or "middle-class escapism." When it began to get serious, it was arrogantly described as a "children's crusade" (to use Marcuse's memorable words). As it grew even more serious, it was characterized as "co-optable." At every point in its complex development, the movement was taken by Marxists for what it was at the given time and either condemned or shrugged off. But as "flower power" gave way to "student power," as "student power" gave way to "control over the streets," and as immense street demonstrations and campus uprisings began to shout "power to the people" and raise clenched fists, our beloved Marxists began to search into the sacred texts -- to the "early writings" and "middle writings" of the Holy One -- to ferret out a formula that would explain how it all happened. Today we are in the Grundrisse stage; yesterday, it was the 1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts; and if I read Jeremy's views accurately, tomorrow it will be the Capital stage.

Well, it's turning into a deathly bore. And with the latest developments in "praxis Marxism," into academic scholasticism -- as the current Gramsci and Lukacs craze seems to indicate. The real issue between Jeremy and myself is that, in my view, none of these neo-Marxian or orthodox Marxian stages suffices -- that we must transcend Marxism itself in Hegel's sense of aufhebung. This means we must incorporate the best of Marx (as we have the best of Hegel and others) -- and go further. My Post-Scarcity Anarchism makes a stab in this direction. People who are interested in following the same direction would do well to read the book itself without Jeremy's blinders. And I would ask that they read not only Post-Scarcity Anarchism but my essay "On Organization and Spontaneity" which appears in the current issue of Anarchos and my "Toward a Philosophy of Spirit" in a forthcoming issue of Telos.

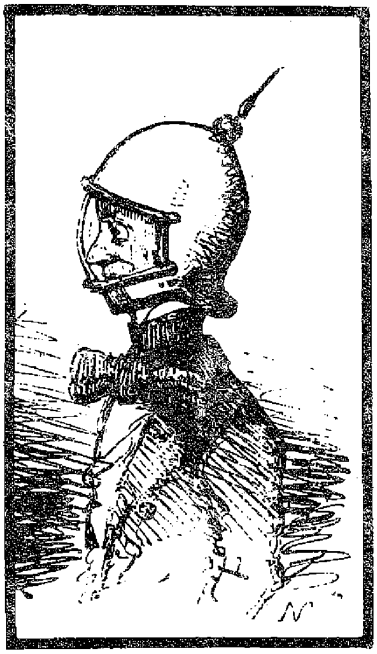
For the rest, my dispute with Jeremy's review boils down to a host of logistical and administrative problems -- incredibly, as though these problems could be discussed merely as matters of "management" without dealing with the changed self that must be hyphenated to the term. Accordingly, Jeremy gets involved in the preposterous problem of who would dump the garbage in Troy that people in Perth Amboy will drink. I would have expected this kind of "problem" from the laissez-faire "anarchists" of the Murray Rothbard school, but hardly from a Council Communist who professes to carry on the Organizationsgeists tradition of Anton Pannekoek.

I will not get into this kind of nonsense. Considering the level of this order of criticism, Jeremy will have to deal in his own mind with whether he has merely assimilated a structure from Pannekoek (i.e. a mechanism called "workers councils" which, if my memory serves me well, Pannekoek never regarded as the permanent form of a communist society) or the problem of geistige relations (which, in my view, represents Pannekoek's noblest contribution to communist theory.) It is the discussion of the latter problem -- of communist subjectivity and relations -- that I find so notably absent in Jeremy's review. And until this problem is seriously taken up in the full recognition that Pannekoek was one of the earliest Marxists to open it in the dismal history of European socialism, Jeremy and I are simply talking away from each other.

As to the details of Jeremy's review, I'd like to bring into question the polemical methods that seem to guide it. Jeremy is obviously out to establish that, as a "product" of

the counterculture, I am a crypto-"naturalist," who would prefer to a lost Golden Age of isolated, self-sufficient autarchical communities. Only from this perspective can I explain the outright distortion in Jeremy's presentation of my views. He unerringly fails to note that when I speak of a "self-sufficient community" in "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought" (p. 80), I precede it with the adjective "relatively." Obviously, I mean more than autarchy when I use the adjective, but Jeremy is out to nail me as an "autarchist." Having committed this distortion, Jeremy proceeds to compound it by viewing my thesis in support of regional integration as something I "concede." You

see, it is not that I believe in regional integration, but rather that I "concede" it is necessary. I must, alas, abide with it. Unless the reader goes beyond Jeremy's rather shady account, here, and reads Post-Scarcity Anarchism, she or he would never know that for several pages of my essay on "Toward a Liberatory Technology" I argue for regional integration and the need to interlink resources between ecocommunities. Jeremy's entire treatment of this area of discussion is tinged by a certain intellectual dishonesty. But Jeremy doesn't know



when to stop. Having turned an argument for integration into a mere "concession," he proceeds still further to compound his distortion by inverting my very view of the relationship between work and technology to the point of utter absurdity. "Bookchin," he declares with a grand flourish, "takes his final dive into science fiction when he envisions 'humans of the future' who simply forget about technology and 'stand at the end of a cybernated assembly line with baskets to cart the goods home." (p. 133)

Now, this could be called the art of "selective quoting" that verges on lying in one's teeth. The reader of Post-Scarcity Anarchism who consults pp. 133-35 will find that "Bookchin," in fact, regards such a notion -- so popular in many circles when the essay was written -- is exactly what must be avoided, quite aside from whether it is possible or not, if the "fracture separating man from machine" is to be healed. "Bookchin" is arguing against the very mentality that yields this sort of "science fiction." Indeed, in the ensuing page "Bookchin" proceeds to argue as forcefully as he can that a balanced relationship must be established between work and the machine, and the machine must be assimilated to artistic craftsmanship.

Frankly, what am I to make of this kind of "misreading"? I don't want to think that Jeremy is a liar or a distorter -- merely, that he reads what he wants to believe. This mode of "reading," in effect, is a mode of thinking. Were I to critically examine Jeremy's review line by line, I could demonstrate that far from overstating the possibilities at hand -- technologically, culturally, and socially -- I have understated them. The amount of material I have amassed on ecotechnologies alone since "Toward a Liberatory Technology" was written would boggle Jeremy's rather limited imagination. The fact is that Jeremy is singularly conservative -- and this conservatism permeates his entire review. He takes things as they are -- from the relations of Troy and Perth Amboy to the national division of labor -- and merely adds a different structure ("workers councils") to the established order of things. He sees no significant change in the self that is to achieve this different structure of self-management nor does he see any changes that people will make in their needs as they change themselves and society. Jeremy, in short, reasons like a bourgeois sociologist who has bought communism as a good ideological product but never assimilated it dialectically or permitted it to change his outlook toward life.

One could go on indefinitely unraveling the skein of hodgepodge criticism that Jeremy inflicts on Post-Scarcity Anarchism. I will not enter into Jeremy's attempt to dissolve ecological microenvironments into "worldwide" macroenviron-

ments (surely Jeremy must know something about the ecosystem concept in ecology which stresses the need for a recognition of local uniqueness), nor will I deal with his silly analogy for the fascinating projections Jacob Rosin presents for molecular industrial chemistry. In my opinion, Jeremy just doesn't know what he is talking about. His observations on classical Athens and the word "citizen" are also silly. I would have hoped that Jeremy understood the whole thrust of my argument: namely, that Athens must be understood not merely in terms of its social limitations (limitations which I would hope we all understood) but as a polis whose attainments were all the more remarkable inspite of its limitations. Jeremy's attempt to link my attitude toward the working class with that of the "end of ideology" people and Tom Hayden is as crude as the Lower East Side "revolutionary" scenario he seems to impute to me. As a person who has spent ten years in heavy industry as a shop steward and union activist, I don't need a sermon about my "moral contempt" for the proletariat. Having acquired my knowledge of the proletariat from shops rather than university libraries, I know workers to be neither inferior nor superior to any other dominated section of the population. In addressing myself to the dubious "privileges" of the middle classes, I was not trying to say that they were more oppressed than workers but that both classes were now being oppressed in new ways and in a new social context.

Another point is worth clarifying. My pamphlet "Listen, Marxist!" (of which some 40,000 copies have been published in separate printings and in anthologies) was the first sixties work that, to my knowledge, posed and predicted the changes that would occur in young workers' attitudes toward the work ethic and hierarchy. I did not suck this viewpoint from my thumb. It came from a personal knowledge of traditional working class attitudes toward work and hierarchy, and from a knowledge of the impact that the counterculture was having on present-day working class youth. Now that this prediction is being harvested in real life, I find it rather amusing that this view is being ripped off (without acknowledgement, of course) by many Marxists as evidence of an "upsurge" by "new" working class "types." I would be quite disturbed, however, to find that this viewpoint is used to reestablish the archaic cult of ouvrierisme and to vitiate the impact of the counterculture as a social force. There are signs that this is occurring. Let me make it clear, however, that I am not leveling this accusation against Jeremy; in fact, I wish I could. For Jeremy there seems to be no problem about the proletariat's psyche inasmuch as the issue hardly exists for him. Apparently, little has changed among workers since the 1860's, when Marx wrote Capital -- merely that they have become more or less "class conscious" during different periods of history.

As to Marx's writings on the Paris Commune as evidence of his attitude toward a "proletarian dictatorship," the less said, the better. It is a notorious fact that Marx's Civil War in France, from which Marxists cull the most libertarian conceptions of the "proletarian dictatorship," was a "theoretical lapse" (shall we say an "anarchist deviation"?) which he "rectified" with very snide remarks about the Commune and the Communards in the last years of his life. (For a comprehensive discussion of this "theoretical lapse," see Ron Suny's The Baku Commune, which I think was published by Princeton University Press a year or two ago.) Marx's comments on the state in the Critique of the Gotha Program are much too spotty to be taken as definitive statements of his views. For reasons I explain in "Listen, Marxist!" Marx was essentially a centralist and more often than not modeled his views of a post-revolutionary period on the Jacobin dictatorship -- that is, in moments when he did not concede that socialism in England and America (Engels later added France and might just as well have added Germany) could be introduced by parliamentary means. The truth is that Marx's views were guided by the "opportunity" at hand: preferably a Jacobin-type dictatorship in his more revolutionary moments, a Commune-type "state" between 1871-75, and when he conceived it possible, a socialist republic led by a workers' party and based on a nationalized economy.

But all of this is secondary to what concerns me even more deeply -- the mentality that permeates Jeremy's review. Marx, owing to his attempt to produce a "scientific" socialism, at once devalued and denatured the libertarian and imaginative elements of early European socialism. Martin Buber discusses this regressive development with considerable insight and sensitivity in his Paths in Utopia. But at least Marx and Engels retained the high tradition of Hegelian thought and the French utopists in their vision of communism. One can still find in Engels' Anti-Duhring, for all its shortcomings, the concept of the rounded individual in a rounded society, based on decentralized communities and on a transcendence of the contradiction between town and country, mental and physical work, and humanity and nature. Engels does not accept urban life, the national division of labor, and the industrial structure as it is. He radically challenges the entire ensemble -- not, like Jeremy, offers cutsy modifications that will "improve" things once workers' concils take over. Engels retains the love of the polis-type society that so profoundly influenced Hegel and German classical philosophy. One senses in Anti-Duhring the influence of the best in Hellenism and Fourierism, the desire for a new sensibility and for new geistige relations between human beings.

In the years following the death of Marx and Engels, we have seen the emergence of a new type of "Marxist": one whose outlook is operational rather than speculative, sociological (and "socialist") rather than communist, structural rather than dialectical, intellectually colorless rather than imaginative. I'm sorry to say that the thinking of this type of "Marxist" is typified by Jeremy's review. Perhaps the kindest name I can give it is "assembly-line socialism." Jeremy, to tell the truth, writes like a social engineer. He is basically concerned not with self-management but with "management," and workers councils happen to be the most democratic way of "adminstering" the what-is. He raises virtually every mediocre argument that one could expect from a street heckler or a bourgeois sociologist -- and the two are merely the opposite sides of the same "commonsensical" coin. Who will clean up the garbage? Who will do the dirty work? Won't "self-sufficient communities" behave like parochial small towns in Indiana? Won't people be greedy? How will the majority be prevented from oppressing the minority. Won't Peoria try to oppress Oshkosh by withholding materials from it -- or whatever ad nauseum? It matters little that Jeremy raises all of these questions as such, but this is the way he thinks.

I find this mentality all the more disquieting when it appears in a comrade and a friend who is likely to invoke the name of Anton Pannekoek as a teacher. It is only recently in an article by Russell Jacoby (see Telos No. 10, Winter 1971) that I learned how earnestly Pannekoek had occupied himself as far back as 1912 with the geistige nature of the proletariat and its organizations -- how he attempted to uproot bourgeois subjectivity not only from the socialist movement but from the working class as a whole. As one who feels closer to the Council Communists than any other organized group in the Marxist movement, I would even more earnestly ask them to explore the emergence of the geistige issue as it appears today -- to advance the work which Pannekoek began into their own era, not to denature it with an economistic sensibility. We have had enough of this sensibility in the dismal seventy years that have poisoned European socialism and led to so many tragic defeats. The word Geist (Spirit) is a good one. As a comrade and friend, I would hope that it is taken seriously by the Root and Branch people with due respect to the memory of Pannekoek as well as to the issues he raised.

November 27, 1972

JEREMY BRECHER RESPONDS

We all face the same problem of getting from the kind of society we have to the kind of society we want. I had hoped that Murray would try to answer some of the questions I raised about his approach to this problem. Instead, he seems to have applied the principle that the best defense is a good offense. He makes little attempt to answer the criticisms of his book, and instead attacks the presumed positions of the reviewer, of his presumed tradition, or even of the "Marxist sects" to which he is presumed to belong. This may be a good debating tactic, but I wish Murray's reply did more to clarify the issues I tried to raise.

Murray states that the "real issue between Jeremy and myself" is whether Marxism is sufficient, or whether it must be transcended, and "for the rest, my dispute with Jeremy's review boils down to a host of logistical and administrative problems." Murray thus neatly ignores all the concrete problems of social organization (not "administration") which were the core of my critique. His unwillingness to deal with these issues is indicated by his constant use of such phrases as "I will not get into this kind of nonsense," "I will not enter into Jeremy's attempt . . ," "nor will I deal with his . . ," and "It matters little that Jeremy raises all of these questions." This is how to duck questions instead of answering them.

I am sorry Murray feels I have distorted his position; I took considerable pains to present it accurately. I agree with him that readers should look at his book and judge themselves whether I have done so. The only two specific distortions he charges me with hardly support the charge, however:

1) Murray says I distort his position by portraying him as a believer in independent communities, whereas he specifically argues for regional integration. But this is exactly the contradiction I was trying to bring out in my review. On the one hand, Murray opposes all but "face-to-face" groups as "mediated." (This is the basis of his critique of workers' councils.) On the other hand, he says he does not believe in autarchic communities, but in regional integration. Whenever he feels accused of believing in one side of this contradiction, he points to his statements in favor of the other. But by his own definition the two are mutually exclusive: you cannot have large-

scale cooperation without "mediated" relations. I had hoped Murray would clear up this central ambiguity of his approach in replying to my review; I still hope he will do so elsewhere.

2) Murray says I make him appear to advocate a society in which a fully automatic technology would turn out all needed products and people would simply collect them. Murray points out that in fact he considers such a state of affairs something to be avoided. Readers of my review will recall, however, that I never said he advocated such a thing; indeed, that was not even the issue. The issue was his belief that this is one of the social options made possible by the development of technology. If Murray doesn't believe it is possible, why does he make such a point of warning against it? This is what Murray calls carrying the art of "selective quotation" to the point that it verges on "lying in one's teeth."

I made what I thought were some rather commonsense criticisms of Murray's expectations for technology. I thought in his reply he might try to correct me, drawing on his considerable knowledge. Instead, he promises still further marvels: "The amount of material I have amassed on eco-technologies alone . . . would boggle Jeremy's rather limited imagination." I am ready to have my imagination boggled, but I hope the new maravels are somewhat more convincing than the last batch.

Murray seems to make a basic change in his approach when he states that he doesn't believe that the "middle classes" are "more oppressed than the workers." In Post-Scarcity Anarchism, in contrast, he states that capitalism "tends to degrade them more abjectly than any other stratum in society." I hope he will clarify his view, and whether he has changed it, at some future point.

As for the matter of "Geist," the question is not whether one believes in it, but where it comes from. Pannekoek's conception of the "spiritual" transformation of the working class is rooted very explicitly in the social relations of workers to each other and to capital. (Indeed, I am surprised to see Murray's advice to learn from Pannekoek on this point, since I have always considered him if anything too mechanical in his view of how economic conditions produce working class "Geist".) It is just the lack of this kind of grounding in the actual conditions of life that I argued Murray's theory lacks. Instead of trying to deal with this criticism, however, Murray simply calls the criticism "Marxist" and therefore bad.

Throughout Murray's piece I had the odd sensation that he was really attacking someone else, not me. I am not now, nor have I ever been, an orthodox, neo-, Lukacian, or Gramscian Marxist. Far from having stood aloof from the radical movement and culture of the 1960's in some presumed Marxist scorn, I have been an active participant in most of its phases; it constituted my basic political experience. But just as Murray thinks we must "transcent" Marxism in the sense of incorporating the best of it and going further (a thought with which I wholeheartedly agree), so I think we have to transcend that movement in just the same way. My review was in part an attempt to start that process. I do not describe Murray as a crypto-naturalist or charge him with advocating an uprising on the Lower East Side; on the contrary I indicated that he differentiates himself from the anti-technologists, and specifically praised him for recognizing that no revolution is possible in the U.S. without the participation of the working class. Far from denying that people change themselves and their relationships as they change their society-- I assume this is what Murry means by the "new self"-- I wrote a book recently with this as the central theme. Far from believing that there has been little change in worker's consciousness since the 1860's, I am currently working on a book whose aim is to show how worker's attitudes are changing and why. The only function I can see for the charicature Murray has drawn of me is to reinforce his contention that my questions need not be taken seriously. Such ad hominem argument is again good debating tactics, but not too helpful in getting out of this sink we live in into some kind of decent society.

-Jeremy Brecher

INTELLECTUALS AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

History and Class Consciousness
Studies in Marxist Dialectics
by Georg Lukacs
MIT Press, 1971

For nearly half a century, History and Class Consciousness by Georg Lukacs has been considered a sort of underground Marxist classic. When an English translation finally appeared last year, it was greeted by a front-page review in the New York Times Book Review -- an odd compliment for a musty collection of revolutionary essays. The pleasurable suppleness of Lukacs' mind notwithstanding, his Hegelianized Marxism makes this book quite difficult to read. Why then, instead of moldering on the shelves of a few university libraries, has it become a sort of Bible for a certain type of radical intellectual?

The central theme of the book is that modern society has become too confusing for workers to understand, and that therefore they can only achieve "class consciousness" when it is inculcated in them by a special font of knowledge, the Communist Party. The appeal of this position to would-be fonts of knowledge is not difficult to discern. For those who can resist the flattery and glory of holding a pivotal place in world history, however, Lukacs' book will prove to be nothing other than at attack on fundamental principles of Marxism, and a defense of the basic principles of class society.

The fundamental idea of the Marxian theory of capitalism is that the development of the relation between capitalists and workers in capitalist society puts the working class in a position where it can and must itself take control of production. The liberation of the working class, Marx held, is the task of the working class alone.

Kautsky and Lenin, chief fonts of wisdom for the Socialist Second and Communist Third Internationals respectively, disagreed with Marx. They held that by itself, working class struggle could never pass beyond the framework of capitalism; that on their own, workers would only make "trade union" demands. Workers could only achieve "revolutionary consciousness" if it was brought to them by intellectuals of the middle class. Lenin cites Kaut-

sky approvingly on this point in What is to be Done? Lukacs agrees; he writes in the preface to the new (1967) edition that by his concept of "class consciousness" he meant the same thing that Lenin did "when he maintained that socialist class consciousness . . . would be implanted in the workers 'from outside,' i.e. 'from outside the economic struggle and the sphere of relations between workers and employers.'"

History and Class Consciousness is essentially a new justification for this position. Lukacs points out that under capitalism, things are not what they seem. One instance of this is the "fetishism of commodities" analyzed by Marx, by virtue of which workers experience the products of their own labor as something independent of and antagonistic to themselves. Lukacs expands this notion: while in fact all social phenomena are the products of people's activity, they appear to people as foreign, alien forces. From this, Lukacs draws the conclusion that the working class is unable to achieve a true conception of its position in society by itself; that conception must be brought to it by the intervention of the Communist Party.

The first thing to note about this position is its opposition to the Marxian theory of consciousness. For Marx, ideas grow out of real social relations and conditions. Lukacs seems to use this approach in explaining why the working class is unable to form a true conception of its position in society. But when he tries to formulate the means by which revolutionary consciousness can be achieved, he falls back on an entirely idealistic solution -- the superior wisdom of the Party, which presumably sees all and knows all. Indeed, if we lift the Marxist disguise, we can see in Lukacs' conception of the Party which comprehends history in its totality -- the Hegelian philosopher who comprehends history in its entirety and therefore discovers its "truth"! It should be no surprise that more orthodox Leninists felt embarrassed by Lukacs' defense -- it exposed their own abandonment of Marxism all to clearly.

Nonetheless, Lukacs put his finger on one of the most important problems of revolutionary theory -- how people come to grasp the social basis of their individual situations. For it is undoubtedly true that in capitalist society our life problems are at first experienced as particular problems, rather than as products of the organization of society as a whole. As a result, we look at first for individual, partial solutions, rather than for a revolutionary reconstruction of the whole society.

To understand how such approaches can change, we have to look at why people hold some ideas rather than others. Ideas, insofar as they are relevant to action, are essentially maps of the environment and plans for how to operate in it. They are generally accepted or rejected on the basis of how well the predictions based on them allow people to function in the world. Thus, for example, as long as people have to deal with capitalism as individuals, such absurd, fetishistic ideas as "the power of money" are useful, indeed essential, for survival; anyone can see that you can't eat money, but just try feeding a family without it. On the other hand, ideas about the general transformation of society are

of little use to people in their daily lives until they are joined with others as part of a social force potentially able to bring them about.

This helps explain why in normal times the working class does not exhibit "revolutionary consciousness." When capitalism is functioning well, revolutionary ideas can be more of a hinderance than a help in getting through life. More conservative ideas may be full of distortions and contradictions, they may even conflict with known facts, but they give at least some guidance for day-to-day activities -- making a living, maintaining a home, staying out of trouble. Indeed, up to a certain point, people may cling all the tighter to old ideas when they begin to fail; it is natural to consider even a poor guide to action better than none at all, especially if it has worked in the past.

But if capitalism encourages such individual adaptation, it simultaneously generates a process which tends in the opposite direction. This is the point Lukacs ignores: that the development of working class struggle itself overcomes the fragmentation of bourgeois society. Marx makes the process quite clear as early as the Communist Manifesto. At first, the workers "form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition." Because of their oppression, the class struggle begins, carried out first by "individual laborers, then by the work people of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality . . ." Win or lose, "the real fruit of their battle lies . . . in the ever expanding union of the workers."

It is this process of class formation which provides the solution to the problem Lukacs poses. For this struggle itself constitutes a series of social experiments through which the working class clarifies for itself the actual structure of society and the real nature of the problems it faces. At first, individual workers try to solve their problems individually and fail; they soon come to see that they must cooperate with those they work with to win anything. These groups in turn see that they must support one another or be defeated one by one. It gradually becomes clear that workers are powerless when they are isolated, but that the more closely they cooperate, the stronger they become. The fragmentation created by capitalism is overcome at the point where individual workers see that their individual problems are the problems of the class as a whole, and can only be eliminated by solving them for the class as a whole.

This process can be observed empirically at various different levels. For example, E.P. Thompson's classic Making of the English Working Class shows how, over a forty year period, English workers changed from thinking of themselves as a collection of disparate individuals and groups to seeing themselves as the working class. At another level, Rosa Luxemburg in The Mass Strike shows how during the Russian Revolution of 1905 the workers of entire regions would strike to protest the firing of a single worker, whereas a few months before they had been apathetic in the face of the most extreme attacks; in the intense intervening struggles they had come to see the relation between their own position and that of every other worker -- of the working class as a whole. For all of his talk about praxis, Lukacs is so preoccupied with the praxis of the Party that he fails to understand the real development of working class praxis -- how the conditions of the working class force it to act, and how this action and its results provide the basis for understanding the workers' position in society.

There is another side to this process of clarification through the class struggle itself. At first the various institutions of capitalist society seem to operate independently and even in conflict with each other -- another of the mystifications of bourgeois society. The various employers, the different strata of capital, the state, the army, the schools and churches, all seem in conflict with each other. They workers appear as simply another such group. As the class struggle intensifies, however,

a polarization of society takes place. In a revolutionary situation, when the working class threatens to take over the means of production and run them itself, all the forces which want to perpetuate a class society will unify against it. The employers, the state, and their allies lose their appearance of diversity and stand revealed as the force maintaining present social relations and present social misery. And this without any tutelage of the workers by any font of wisdom "from outside."

Of course, such situations do not occur every day. During the long stretches when the class war is muted or suppressed, when the working class appears integrated into capitalism, they are difficult even to imagine. But the magic want of the Party and its superior knowledge is of no use in whisking away this situation. For if the Party's arguments are truly revolutionary, they will be of no practical use and make little sense to the majority of workers, and the Party will remain only an isolated sect. History has shown that in order to avoid this fate, most self-proclaimed revolutionary parties in practice become reformist, whatever their rhetoric, and become a barrier to the next revolutionary upsurge.

What the working class needs in a non-revolutionary period is not the sophisticated tutelage of radical intellectuals bemoaning the workers' incapacity, but a sense of how its immediate struggles relate to the long-term historical struggle of the working class to take control of production. This relation is extremely difficult to grasp as an abstract intellectual argument -- no matter how brilliant the intellectuals who are presenting it. But as George Sorel points out in his Reflections on Violence, it can be clearly and vividly seen if we take the present strikes and other class struggles and envision their development into a general strike and general war against capitalism. Revolution can best be understood as the expansion and completion of the workers' daily struggle against their immediate oppression. Such a universalized struggle is the totality the working class must grasp. A consciousness based on it leaps over

all the problems of "reified consciousness" posed by Lukacs by presenting their solution -- people taking conscious control of their social activity. If even this consciousness is difficult to maintain during periods of social peace, we should hardly expect more success with the subtle dialectics of Lukacs' revelation of reification.

In a revolutionary situation, "revolutionary consciousness" develops directly out of the practical problem the working class faces -- namely, the unified opposition of the capitalists, the state, and their allies. It is the old ruling class which presents the workers with the choice between submitting or taking over society, in other words, which leads them to be revolutionary. Thus in Russia in 1917, the factory owners tried to break the workers' drive for "immediate demands" by declaring massive lockouts; the workers responded by taking over the factories and running them themselves. This action -- the essence of socialist revolution -- required no tutelage from a revolutionary party; it grew out of the practical situation in which the workers found themselves. In fact even the most radical party, the Bolsheviks, opposed workers management of production and eventually succeeded in destroying it. In Italy in 1920,

it was similarly a management counter-offensive in the form of a lockout which triggered the great factory occupations and the reopening of production under direction of the workers. This development too was opposed by the socialists. The highly-touted role of the mavarick socialist Gramsci was essentially to clarify the significance of what the Turin workers were already doing by arguing that their factory committees could in fact become the cells of a new society. In Spain, the revolt of the generals and their attempt to suppress the working class forced the working class to take over production and to combat the revolt with armed force. In all these cases we can see that the jump from struggle within capitalism to struggle against capitalism does not come from the teachings of a revolutionary party, but from the practical problems faced by the working class itself. In this at least history vindicates Marx's theory, and refutes Lukacs' view that "revolutionary consciousness" is impossible without the education of the workers by a revolutionary party.

Lukacs gives an important clue to the origin of his position in his 1922 attack on Rosa Luxemburg's "Critique of the Russian Revolution." Her error in evaluating the Russian Revolution, he argues, "consists in the overestimation of its purely proletarian character," "the underestimation of the importance of the non-proletarian elements in the revolution," and her consequent "underplaying of the role of the party in the revolution." Since the revolution depended as much on the peasantry and the lower middle class as on the working class, it followed as a consequence that only a revolutionary party could draw together and lead these disparate elements. This is of course identical with Lenin's analysis of the class forces in Russia. It reveals how closely Lukacs' theory -- indeed, Leninism itself -- was tied to the underdeveloped conditions of capitalism in Eastern Europe. The inappropriateness of this policy in the industrial countries of Western Europe was the point made by the Left Communists who were expelled from the Third International, and against whom Lenin wrote his pamphlet Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder. Leninism was in essence an abandonment of working class revolution both in theory and practice, in favor of an alliance of disparate social elements -- many of which had no interest in working-class rule of society -- led by the Communist Party.

In an era when imperialism has made private capitalist development impossible in backward countries, this has proved to be a formula through which many nations have been able to achieve development through state capitalism. But it has precious little to do with socialism -- the direction of the production process by the producers themselves. Only socialism was and is revolutionary for the industrially advanced countries -- indeed, state capitalism was the reactionary solution to the problems of capitalism, as the rise of fascism revealed.

Even more concretely, Lukacs' theory reflects the conditions of the Hungarian "Revolution" of 1919, in which he played a leading part and achieved the supreme tutorial position of Commissar of Education. A general strike by the workers led to the collapse of the monarchy, which was followed by an inept bourgeois republic. When the new government in turn collapsed, Bela Kun and his small band of Communist cadres stepped into the vacuum and declared a Soviet Republic, in alliance with the Socialist Party. The operated completely from above, establishing a government of their own officials, promulgating a constitution, and issuing a multitude of directives for nationalization and reform -- much in the manner of benevolent despots. Apparently the masses were not appreciative. In his capitulation speech at the end of his 133-day rule, Bela Kun attributed his government's collapse to the abandonment of the leaders by the masses, who he claimed lacked revolutionary class-consciousness. We can see this experience of would-be revolutionary leaders unappreciated by the masses recapitulated in sophisticated theoretical form in Kukacs' book.

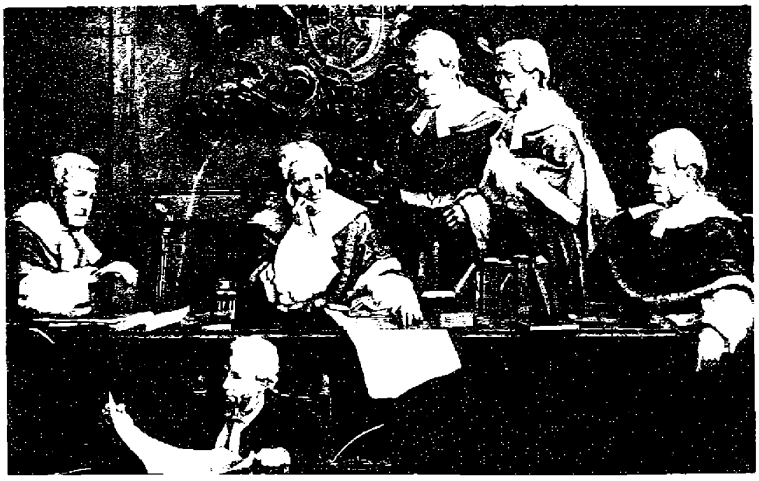
This leads us to a final consequence of Lukacs' non-Marxian premises. Marx postulates that it is their real social conditions and relations which

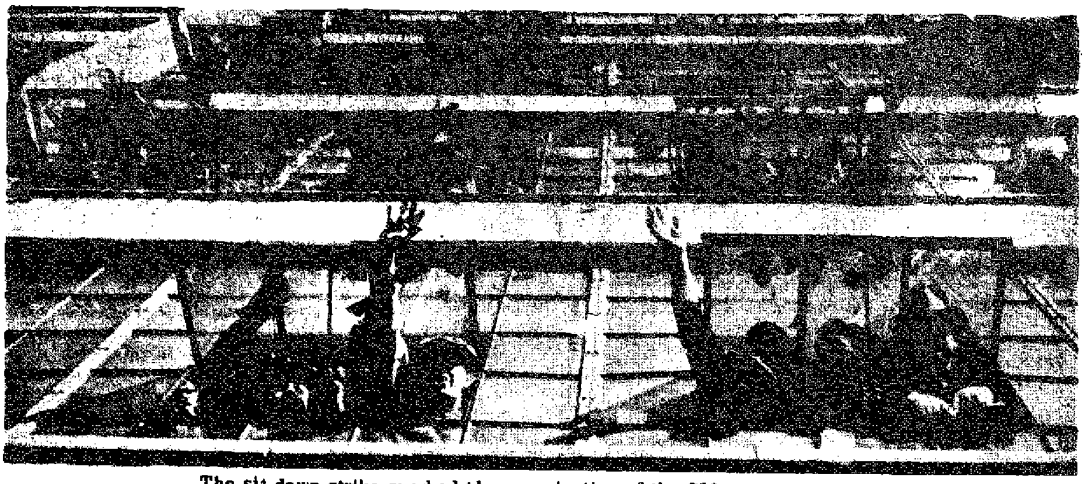
determine peoples' consciousness. If this is so, then any group which is separate in its life conditions from the working class will develop ideas and interests that grow out of its own situations and needs, in contrast to those of the working class itself. Examples of this process are described in detail in Michels' Political Parties. It can be seen in the consistency with which self-proclaimed revolutionary parties have followed their own interests by either supporting capitalist governments or establishing themselves as a new ruling class. Here at least the Marxian theory seems to be borne out by the historical evidence. Those who would form a "real" revolutionary party without the defects and corruptions of the old ones: please note.

Lukacs seems to regard the revolutionary party as immune to this process because of the purity of its ideas. Because it can comprehend the totality, it can point out the interests of the working class as a whole. Here again, under the disguise of Marxism we can see the idealist philosopher, who has no interests of his own and therefore can see the interests of the whole. But it is one function of Marxism precisely to unmask such illusions -- to show the specific social interests that lie hidden behind such formulations. For every ruling class proclaims that its rule reflects not its own interests but the general good. We must apply the Marxian postulates to Lukacs himself and to the Leninism he defends.

In this light, Lukacs' theory is clearly revealed as a brilliant argument for the control of society by an "enlightened" minority of organized radicals. For them it provides the two great justifications needed by any ruling group: that it alone has the understanding needed to direct society, and that the masses are incapable of directing society themselves. Thus his theory not only flatters radical intellectuals, but provides a perfect excuse for them to take power themselves -- naturally "for the good of" a working class "too ignorant" to know its own interests. While Lukacs' theory can never hope for mass appeal, it is perfectly suited to be the in-group faith, the "esoteric doctrine" of those who, in a time of social crisis, may well be the "last, best hope" of class society.

Stu Porman





The sit-down strike sparked the organization of the CIO in the 1930's

L. De Caux, Labor Radical, Beacon: 1970, pp. 557, $4.50

I found the beginning of this book, the autobiography of a CIO insider during the 'thirties, very interesting. His accounts of life in an English public (private) school and in the university are very perceptive. Drawn by the desire to escape his privileged past, which he finds stultifying, he goes to America to attempt to "join the working class." He provides some very interesting, impressionistic sketches of hoboing around the country, and of the many radicals of all sorts that he met.

His past life catches up with him, however, as he decides to become a labor reporter and write about the struggles of others. He gets drawn into the circle of the union leaders, becoming publicity director for the newly founded CIO. From this point on the book became an excruciating pain for me to read, as it is hard to find a single fact about the class struggle, as opposed to the struggles of one union bureaucrat with another union bureaucrat, or with a government bureaucrat.

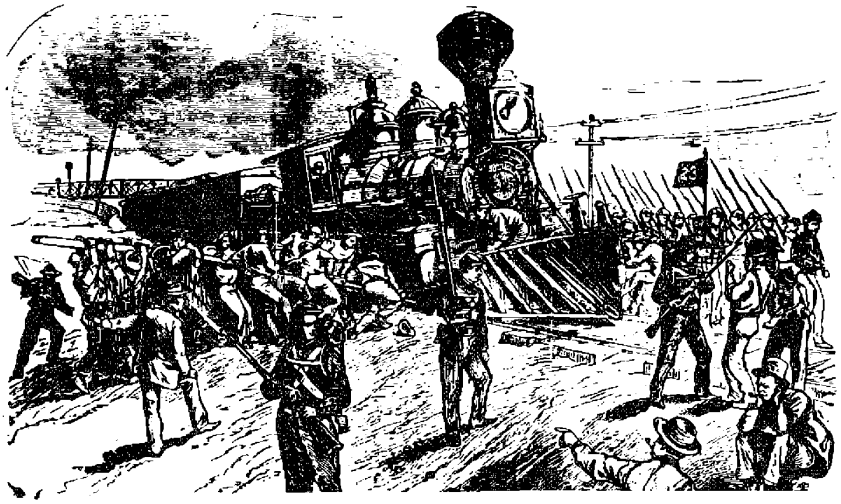
Looking at the 1930's from the vantage point of the CIO office causes De Caux to miss all the interesting things that happened in the decade. He neglects to mention that the the strike wave began two years before the founding of the CIO. The only people active at the local level that he mentions are the Communists, occasionally socialists, or members of some other sect. The real rank-and-file which created the sitdowns is never mentioned. The great Flint sit-down in 1937 is dealt with from the viewpoint of John L. Lewis's negotiations with various bosses and politicians. What occurred inside the occupied factories is never mentioned. And, lastly, De Caux, like all Communist Party sympathizers - and other union bureaucrats who took the no strike pledge - neglects to mention the huge wartime wildcat strike wave. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the period from Pearl Harbor to VJ Day saw more strikes, involving more workers, than any comparable period in American history; but De Caux mentions only the strike of the miners' union, which he admits was led by Lewis because of Lewis's anger with Roosevelt, and not because of any love for the quality of the miners' lives.

After De Caux is expelled/ resigns from his CIO position, his book resumed having some interest for me. He describes travelling around the country and talking to a lot of local organizers - still not rank-and-file workers, but at least they have more interest in their lives than the Washington bureaucrats faced with the problem of whether or not to we wear a tuxedo. His description of the IBJ and congressional harassment in the 1950's gives a good feeling of what it felt like to suffer this treatment.

De Caux concludes that the experience of the CIO should show young radicals that a real workers' movement is possible in this country. I think his book shows what the workers had better avoid if they are to create a real workers' movement that can accomplish more than the saving of capitalism that the CIO accomplished. The only use I can see for this book is for workers who want an inside view of how "their" union bureaucrats live and think, or as a lesson to radicals on what to avoid. It is also another lesson on how labor history shouldn't be written.

Stephen Soldz

STRIKE
A REVIEW



There is a growing awareness among the left that we are approaching a fateful turning point in our history. The apocalyptic expectations of the 60's have dissolved away, leaving remarkably little profound disillusionment. Instead, there are many radicals throughout the country quietly taking stock of their personal needs to earn a living and plan their adult lives, while continuing to search for ways to help build a viable movement. Of course, there is no guarantee that the left will not dissipate as more and more people try to find a place for themselves in the everyday, workaday world. The next few years, however, offer tremendous possibilities because for the first time in more than a generation, the working people of this country are in a mood that the left, living and working in their midst, can resonate with and thrive upon. Things are very fluid, and it is wrong to assume that large groups of workers have anything like a "post-scarcity consciousness". But just for that reason, the left can play a decisive role in helping people define and articulate their dissatisfaction. Rapid and fundamental shifts in popular attitudes have happened many times in the past. To facilitate one in the next few years, radicals are going to have to find ways to encourage the self-education of the working class, thus creating an atmosphere in which people can specify their problems, propose solutions, and focus their actions. One of the basic tasks is to provide agitational and educational literature. Fortunately, this is getting underway, and one example is the recent publication of Jeremy Brecher's Strike!.

The book is about mass strikes in American history. A brief introduction sets the theme -- working people have a long history of marshalling their strength and asserting their power in a society that condemns them to be powerless. The bulk of the book is given over to a well-paced narrative of the strikes of 1877, 1886, the early 1890's, 1919, the 1930's and early 40's, and 1946. After a clear explanation of the meaning of these events, there is a fine summary of current on-the-shop-floor struggles which suggests that we have not seen the last of the mass strikes. The book ends with a short account of how mass strikes generated the germs of a new society in Russia in 1917, Italy in 1920, and Spain in 1936. It comes as no surprise, after reading the book and absorbing its message, that people can create a society in which all share responsibility for the well-being of all when they exercise their self-organized power without limitation.

Brecher belongs to the school of writers who believe that the fewest and simplest words say it best, and that makes for excellent popular writing. Despite its length and scope, Strike!

is a very accessible book, and for this reason alone, it will be a valuable educational tool. But the style is not its only virtue. Strike! is a very important book because it is not the usual kind of radical popular history. It is not a cheering account of heroic episodes or a hymn for "progressive" trends. It is most unlike Boyer and Morals' Labor's Untold Story, for example, whose basic virtue is that it warms the heart while documenting some of the harsh realities of American life. Strike! is very different because, along with the economy of style, there is an economy of purpose. Jeremy Brecher makes it explicit from the beginning that he didn't write a catch-all history of mass strikes. He focused specifically on the way workers organized and spread the strikes. The book, therefore, is an exploration of the wondrous process by which people, released from the isolation and subservience of daily life, learn to cooperate with one another, while challenging the forces that rule them. The analysis is set up as an induction from the historical episodes, and the power of the book's style is such that the inductive machinery grinds very smoothly. The conclusions emerge out of the immense detail effortlessly, and the reader is left with a powerful impression of the general dynamics of mass self-activity. This is an impressive achievement and it is in marked contrast to the standard popular histories. They rarely convey any of the inner workings of history and usually leave the reader in a dazed state of mind, basking in the afterglow of magnificent struggles.

Strike! is about mass strikes because they are the events that most perfectly reveal the extent of mass self-activity. But underlying this focus is a grand theme that runs through the entire book -- the only thorough antidote to powerlessness is the self-initiative of a self-reliant people. To my mind, the greatest merit of Strike! is that it makes this ideological statement with convincing concreteness. It demonstrates its truth in the past and suggests its possibility in the present. Schooling, the means of communication, the manipulations of leaders all conspire together to convince working people that they are not capable of running their own lives. They are not brainwashed by all this fuss, but their self-confidence is blunted, while their cynicism and passivity is fostered. Strike! does as well as any piece of literature can to counter this situation.

So far, I've considered Strike! as propaganda suitable for our times. But it is also an ambitious work of history, something few popular histories are. Jeremy Brecher has strong opinions on the touchy problems of spontaneity, organization, and leadership, and he doesn't hesitate to interpret history accordingly. But his politics are upfront and he applies them consistently, with ample regard for the facts. Consequently, Strike! offers a well-argued interpretation of the significance of mass strikes, and it deserves to be considered as a valuable contribution to labor history. I want to move on to a discussion of it in these terms. I agree with much of the book, but I think that it suffers from the utilization of preconceived categories that do not do justice to the complexities of history. For the sake of debate, I will emphasize their limitations. I am not sure what I would use in their place, however, and I will not offer any definite opinions on the questions raised.

Once, during the long feud with the followers of Lassalle, Marx challenged their willingness to deal with Bismarck in a striking passage: "The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing". The thought has been echoed since in the writings of people like Paul Mattick, and Strike!, in many ways, is a favorable commentary upon it. The book is structured by many such either/or's -- either the working class is powerful or powerless.

self-active or passive, engaged in mass strikes or integrated into the system, self-organized spontaneously or unorganized by leaders, self-conscious or laboring under false consciousness. Usually, radicals employ more familiar opposites like reform or revolution and defensive or offensive action, and I'm sure that many are going to be grated by the uncompromising dialectic of Strike!. In my opinion, both kinds of dialectic have their place in the analytic tool box. In Europe at the present time, for example, the working class is certainly neither revolutionary nor nothing, but here, because of the decline of class traditions since the 1920's, how much more than nothing is it? But once this is said we haven't said much, and the problem, to my mind, with any dialectic is that it is a very crude instrument of analysis. By this I mean two things. 1) The working class is described by a range of possible conditions that barely captures the richness and variety of its presence throughout modern history. 2) The dialectic has a way of mystifying the dynamics of the transition that the working class often makes from one condition to another. The net result of an overdependence on the dialectic is a heavy-handed manipulation of its categories at the expense of a sensitive study of reality, and ultimately, a stifling of the historical imagination.

To a certain extent, Strike! suffers from this sort of distortion. First of all, each strike seems to be like every other strike, and labor history is reduced to a story of endless risings over more or less the same issues. Since there are over 200 pages of detail, much of it sounding repetitive, the book borders on being monotonous at places, and then it is saved only by its vigorous sense of purpose. Labor history, however, does not consist of so many episodes of the class struggle, all more or less alike. Over time, given particular industries and localities, the issues at stake in particular strikes have changed, and the significance of those strikes for the labor movement cannot be evaluated except in that context. It is true that Jeremy Brecher attempts to provide some of this changing background, especially from the 1930's on, but he does it only as an aside. There is very little investigation of the goals and aspirations of the strikers, and instead, they seem to be robots, propelled into action with unfailing regularity by the relentless course of history. Each strike, instead of erupting out of particular environments and structured by particular intentions, emerges courtesy of the Spirit of the Proletariat, kind enough to reveal itself as it makes its way through the world. To the extent that the book doesn't explore what the strikers are up to, it can't evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. And since it is not anchored in the specific density of events, it cannot suggest what might have happened. Floating in the company of Hegelian Spirits, Strike! sometimes approaches the fantastic, as when it implies that the American working class frequently came to the brink of revolution, only to be betrayed by its leadership. In 1894, for example, Brecher writes that "we are presented with the spectacle of Eugene Victor Debs, perhaps the greatest example of a courageous, radical, and uncorruptable trade union official in American history, trying to end the strike in order to prevent it from becoming an insurrection" (p. 95). Was revolution in the air, was it conceivable at all, and if so, was it feasible, or was the strike exhausted and decisively defeated by the Federal troops? Strike! rarely gets into this kind of question, and to the extent that it doesn't, it fails to fulfill its ambition to weigh the capacity of common people to shape their destiny. With the dialectic in command, it can only hint at some of the possibilities.

Jeremy Brecher limited himself to the history of mass strikes because, he argues, they arethe most important means that workers have in exerting their power. If mass strikes are demythologized and carefully located in the proper context,

LABOR CREATES ALL WEALTH
8 HOURS CONSTITUTE A DAYS WORK
ALL MEN ARE BORN EQUAL

this turns out to be false. Often, mass strikes are simply the most dramatic means of protest. Great Episodes of Struggle can shadow out more significant expressions of class power, and the whole range must be considered before evaluating the significance of any one of them. Take the riots of 1877. At the time, many working class communities rose up in anger because the political and job control thatthey had exercised previously was being undermined. Mass action had been used before to keep the boss in line when he threatened to eliminate their long-standing power. It had been a demonstration of strength before, based on the organized power of the community, but when the latter was dissolved by the depression of 1873, mass action alone was just a futile gesture of protest. To stretch a phrase, the working class in 1877 (in some places) was revolutionary and nothing.

Jeremy Brecher takes some inspiration from Rosa Luxemburg's writings on mass strikes, and when she turned her attention to them after the 1905 revolution in Russia, they were, indeed, major expressions of workers' power throughout the industrial world. But by then, they were determined and frequently well-organized struggles, not desperate risings, and they were fostered and justified by elaborate theories of direct political action. Hand in hand with these struggles, however, was a struggle for political power, which Brecher ignores altogether. And just as important was the bitter struggle by skilled workers to retain control over their work-time. That was waged daily and often with no fireworks, and yet it was a struggle over the most significant form of power the working class possessed, short of outright revolution.

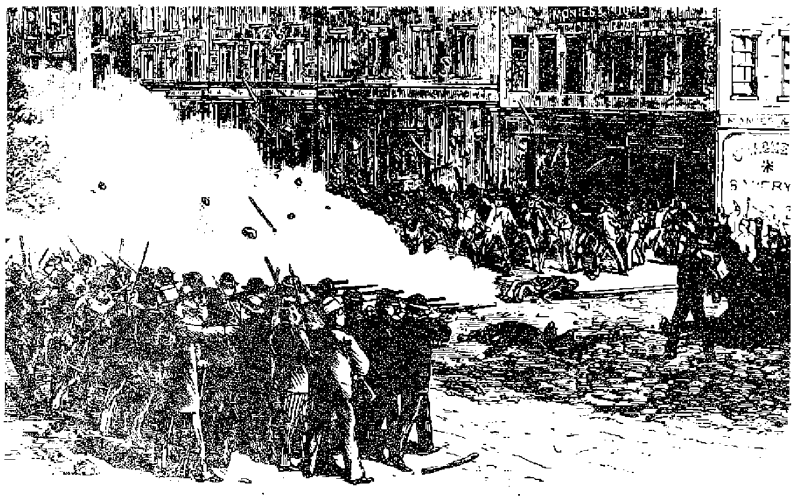
These brief comments don't being to suggest what a history of working class power would be like, but it is clear, I hope, that it is not possible to restrict the story to the Great Events. The continuous development of the web of working class life must be mapped before any conclusions can be drawn. In a sense, Jeremy Brecher cannot be faulted for not doing this; there is little good labor history that he could have based his book upon. He seems to realize the problem, because the chapters on recent times, for which there are better sources, do justice to the relation of mass strikes to daily life, and they are the best parts of the book.

My second qualm about the dialectic concerns the way it mystifies the ability of the working class to shift gears. In Strike!, the process in question is the rapid development of events during mass strikes. Armed with the dialectic, Jeremy Brecher zeroes in on the general dynamic of mass self-activity. But why do mass strikes follow such a variety of courses? Why do some fizzle (1877), why are others determined struggles (1886, 1894, 1919), and why are still others so easily co-opted and channeled (1930's and 40's). Basically, it is a function of the degree to which the working class has arrived at self-awareness and acquired self-confidence, both before and during each strike. By limiting his attention to the events of the strike, Brecher seems to be saying that workers can develop a mature sense of self-initiative during any episode of spontaneous action, providing they are not repressed too soon. But surely, the degree to which workers are organized and tempered by experience before they swing into action is just as important a determinant of how far they go once in motion. Spontaneity, when not sustained by prior organi zation and not disciplined by experience, is a very fragile thing. It requires preparation and direction to flourish in all its power. Strike! destroys the case of those who harp on the need for organization and program to get a rise out of the masses, but it doesn't prove its own case for trusting exclusively in the fruits of spontaneity.

A crucial factor in the ability of the working class to organize itself during mass strikes (or any time) is the quality of leadership. In Strike!, the only thing leaders do is inhibit the rank-and-file's capacity for self-action. Jeremy Brecher is perfectly correct in emphasizing their role in containing the strikes. But often, they have little trouble doing so because the rank-and-file depends on them for inspiration and services like communication. This kind of dependence is not necessarily repressive, however, as long as leaders do their best to transfer their responsibilities downwards. In fact, the working class has never cultivated its self-initiative without the example and leadership of militants. Usually, they have been trade union officials or members of radical organizations, and their experience and contacts made in organizational affairs have been instrumental in enabling them to educate, advise, inspire, and lead those around them. Strike! fudges their role in mass strikes by insisting that their contribution derives "not as a result of their organizational connections" (p. 257). But mass strikes spread and maintain their coherence through the network of militants which exists thanks to their organizational ties. And it is not true that radical organizations "have done little to clarify the possible revolutionary significance of mass actions or to develop their more radical potentialities" (p. 257). The C.P. is simply not the standard to generalize from. On the opposite extreme from the C.P. is the example of Albert Parsons and the Chicago anarchists, and in between there have been many local SLP, SP, IWW, and other groups that did as much as possible to clarify what was at stake. I agree with much of what Jeremy Brecher has to say about the repressive role of trade unions and the pettiness of radical groups. But they are the organizations that militants must work through, and consequently, their contribution is far more ambiguous than he makes it out to be.

There is not much to say in summary. The dialectic is not much help in dissecting the involved interaction of spontaneity, organization, and leadership, let alone in making sense of the overall pattern of labor history. We must remove the either/or from its traditional central place and face up to the both/and and the neither/nor. Perhaps then we may arrive at a more refined sense of what it takes for the working class to become self-reliant and powerful.

Steven Sapolsky



BLACK MAGIC

George P. Rawick, The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol. I; From Sundown to Sunup, The Making of the Black Community, Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1972, $2.95.

This book is undoubtedly one of the finest volumes yet to appear in the area of American social history. Its contribution to an understanding of American society is two-fold: 1) It is the most insightful and penetrating analysis of slavery now available, and 2) its methodology can serve as a fruitful model for future studies of other aspects of this society, be they of an historical or a contemporary nature. Due to its function as the introduction to nineteen volumes of slave narratives (upon which it draws for its interpretation of slavery), there is a great danger that it will become known only to scholars and academicians, becoming safely encapsulated within the walls of university libraries or professors' offices. In this brief review I hope to demonstrate the importance of this book -- as well as its weaknesses -- for all who hope to change American society and recognize the need to understand its complexity as a step toward its transcendence.

Rawick's introductory remarks offer us a critique of the majority of previous analyses of American history and society and suggest some fresh directions in which we should head in our efforts to understand the dynamics of American society which both maintain it and indicate the possibilities of its revolutionary transformation. Our entire focus must change. Mainstream and "radical" historians have, for the most part, shared a common approach to their subject matter. That is, for them,

> the history of American society has been subordinated to the history of the American state; the reality of the American people has been subordinated to the history of industrial technology, of capitalism, and of related values and institutional arrangements. (p. xiii)

Such an approach is seriously inadequate for understanding the dynamics of our society. Although it may offer us a penetrating analysis of how the bourgeoisie rules (e.g., Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society), it cannot contribute to a comprehension of the internal contradictions, class conflict, and the growing potentiality for self-transformation existing at the heart of American society. As such tendencies develop more fully, a new approach is demanded by the course of events itself. "In a world consistently racked with disorder, few things are more precious than a sense of method enabling us to see the same world with new vision." (W. Gorman, "Black History," The South End, Jan.18, 1972, p. 4). Rawick's contribution to a methodology for such an undertaking is immense, providing the reader with such a "new vision", one of how the masses -- in this case, the slaves -- who have been primarily portrayed as the passive objects of ruling class manipulation, sought collectively to confront their social situation and develop new institutions and strengths which enabled them to resist their oppression and support individual and collective acts of rebellion.

He also stresses -- quite rightly -- the need to come to grips with black history if we are to understand American society as a whole. Indeed, the "proletariat" is neither all white, nor we should add, all male, and until we comprehend the socio-historical situation of blacks and women and its relation to society in general and the rest of the working class in particular, our understanding of the dynamics at work within American society must remain fragmentary.

> Black history in the United States must be viewed as an integral, if usually antagonistic, part of the history of the American people. Without understanding the historical development of black society, culture, and community, comprehension of the totality of America's development is impossible. (p. xiii)

A further general point made at the outset of this book may, if true, have very serious ramifications for existing theories of social change. Rawick discusses the process by which new cultures and "new people" develop out of existing cultures and personality structures. By no means does a revolution mean that we can immediately start anew with a clean slate. Rather,

> Culture and personality are not like old clothes that can be taken off and thrown away. The ability of anyone to learn even the simplest thing is dependent upon utilizing the existing cultural apparatus. "New" cultures emerge out of older cultures gradually and never completely lose all traces of the old and the past. Human society is a cumulative process in which the past is never totally obliterated. Even revolutions do not destroy the past. Indeed, at their best, they liberate that which is alive from that which stifles human progress, growth, and development. Culture is a historical reality, not an ahistorical, static abstraction.

This book can be understood as an argument that "black culture" and the "black community" developed as a new social form out of the old society, slavery in the American South.

Rawick's attempt to understand slavery is unique. He neither chastizes any group involved or glorifies anyone -- slaves, slaveholders, poor whites, abolitionists. Rather, he seeks to portray their interaction and the contribution of such interaction to the development of the black community. He starts out this effort by necessarily focusing on aspects of slavery which have hitherto been misunderstood by traditional analysis.

> The emphasis throughout this work will be on the creation of the black community under slavery, a process which largely went on outside of work relations. Up until now the focus in the discussion of American slavery has been on what went on from sunup to sundown. It is hoped that this work will shift the emphasis to the full life of the slaves, to those aspects of their reality in which they had greater autonomy than at work. While from sunup to sundown the American slave worked for another and was harshly exploited, from sundown to sunup he lived for himself and created a behavioral basis which prevented him from becoming the absolute victim. (p. xix)

Rawick rejects all the present theories concerning slavery -- 1) the myth that the slaves were well-treated and happy; 2) the notion that slaves were "dehumanized victims, without culture, history, community, change, or development" (p. 3); and 3) that "slavery was so bad that the slaves were almost always plotting insurrection or actually at the barricades." (p. 54) Rather, relying on the slave narratives, which "enable us to see maltreatment of slaves within the context of the total life of the slaves, who, while oppressed and exploited, were not turned into brutalized victims, but found enough social living space to allow them to survive as whole human beings." Rawick contends that "there were certain areas of autonomy carved out by the slaves in a situation which usually produced neither absolute victims nor instand revolutionaries." (p. 55) What developed was the black community, which enabled the slaves to deal with their daily existence and to resist their oppression. "This reality of community was the major adaptive process for the black man in America." (p. 10) How was this black community formed?

Rawick stresses the importance of African cultural traditions. Indeed, much of the text is devoted to a discussion of their nature and their transformation under slavery. However, it must be recognized that there was not merely one culture involved, but several.

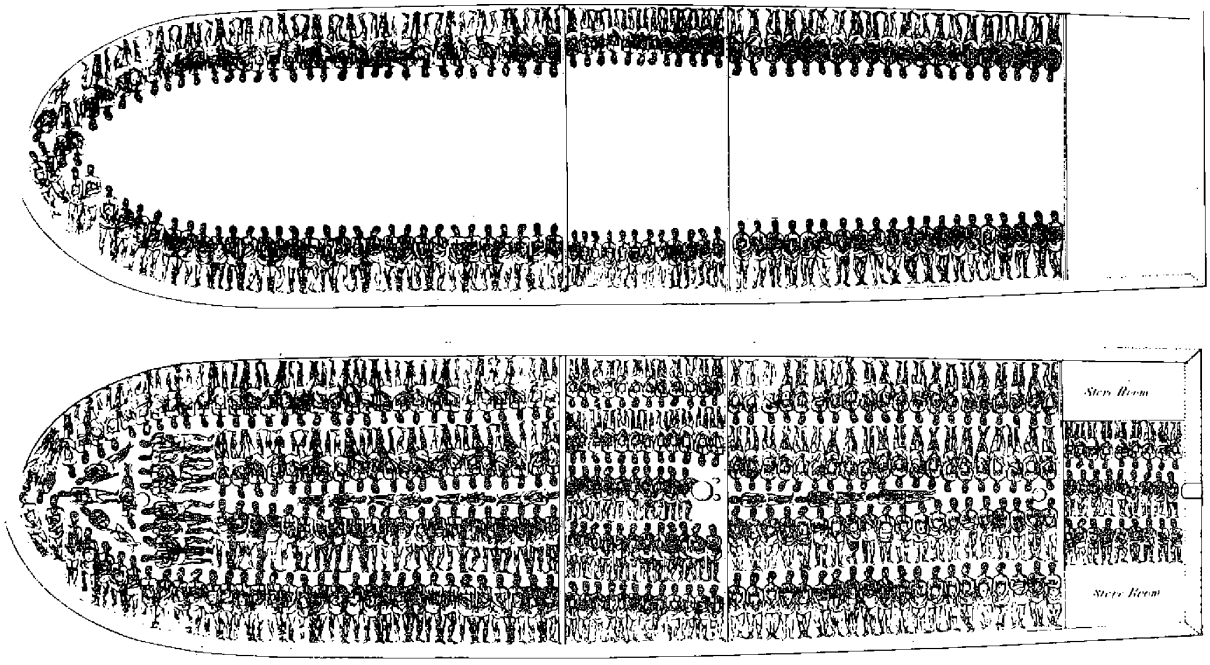
> Slaves in the U.S. had come from many different African cultures. They were thus faced with the difficult task of adjusting not only to their new environment and their new social relationships, but also to each other; they had to build a culture out of the interactions of Africans with other Africans. Therefore, while all Africans were slaves and slaves were supposed to act in a specific way, none knew what that way was. There was no model to follow, only one to build . . . (p. 8)

Moreover, these traditions were not simply retained, but were transformed to meet the new social situation which confronted the slaves. They were utilized -- out of necessity -- as the foundation for new modes of behavior and new institutional arrangements. "We will not look for the simple retention of African traits, but rather seek out the processes whereby one set of cultural tools was used to build other, more adequate tools. A living people does not carry the past on its back if it is able to transcend it in order to meet the present and prepare for the future." (p. 30) These African traditions have been systematically ignored by historians ever since white people began studying slavery. In fact, until the recent rebirth of black awareness, they were largely unknown among black people as well. "The heritage of racism had nowhere more obscured reality than in this area of an image of the African past." (p. 14) Rawick presents us with a picture of this past reality.

Firstly, he attacks the myth that Africans made good slaves because they were used to being slaves to other Africans before the arrival of the Europeans. There was slavery in West Africa, but it was qualitatively different from the chattel slavery of North America. Slaves in Africa were treated as servants and often had full human and political rights. They were never dehumanized to the point of becoming merely a piece of property. However, interaction with the Europeans led to an increased demand for slaves which was met primarily by waging war and raiding other tribes for captives. Also, political opponents were sold into slavery. Those who had been slaves in the first place were seldom sold to the Europeans. Rawick goes on to destroy the myth that Africans were imported because they made such "good" slaves -- that the native Indian population was "nobler and prouder and braver in their opposition." The question really boils down to the nature of the society from which the potential slave was taken. Those who came from "self-sufficient subsistence economies without elaborate social structures and state forms" often made poor slaves (many Africans shared this background with the native Indians) because

> more than the whip of a master is required to make a slave work regularly. There must be an integral social organization of work and the constant internalization of values and attitudes conducive to work, an internalization that both comes from and reinforces traditions of daily, steady, regular work on a co-operative basis but with a need and room for individual initiative. (p. 27)

Those West Africans from more complex societies were thus more accustomed to such a social structure and organization of work and thus were more capable of adaptation. However, Rawick emphasizes that they were far from quiescent. In fact, slaves with such backgrounds were often the leaders of revolts. Here he gives an example of a dialectical analysis, arguing that the slave personality must be viewed as a unity of oppo-



sites. "After all," Rawick states, "accomodation is not antithetical to rebellion; indeed, it is rebellion by other means." (p. 28) He develops this argument more fully in his chapter "Master and Slave: Resistance," drawing also on the work of Frantz Fanon.

> Unless the slave has a tendency to be Sambo he can never become Nat Turner. One who has never feared becoming Sambo, never need rebel to maintain his humanity. Unless we understand the contradictory nature of the rebel personality, we can never portray this reality. (pp. 95-6)

Religion played a vital part in this development of community. In this area, the importance of West African culture is clear; religion was not "otherworldly" in that "there was no distinction between sacred and secular activities... For people from such a world, religious activities were areas of considerable potential creativity and social strength. The slaves in the New World used religion as the central area for the creation and re-creation of community." (p. 32) Rawick recognizes how much such statements seem to deviate from Marxist orthodoxy and he thus attempts to elaborate further the complexity of the problem. "While religion certainly may at times be an opiate, the religion of the oppressed usually gives them the sustenance necessary for developing a resistance to their own oppression." (p. 33) The religion discussed here is not that foisted on the slaves by their owners, but that of their own cultural background. As the attempted suppression by the slaveholders of such autonomous expressions of religion on the part of the slaves is depicted, it becomes clear that the owners themselves perceived such behavior as a threat to their hegemony. From the narratives it is apparent that "the slaves understood that the official religion was being used as a method of social control and it is clear that for many slaves it simply didn't work." (p.36) Black religion, due to its this-worldliness and its function as a mode of self-expression and self-development, played a crucial role in the formation of the community.

> Because the black religious expression contained the most significant forms of black culture in North America, the form which most preserved the West African impulse and identity, it provided the basis for an independent struggle against slavery and racism. It was out of the religion of the oppressed, the damned of the earth, that came the daily resistance to slavery, the significant slave strikes, and the Underground Railway, all of which constantly wore away at the ability of the slave masters to establish their own pre-eminent society. (p. 51)

Such a picture of the role of black religion during slavery may help us better understand the complex role played in the struggles of the last two decades by black clergymen, who have served both as the embodiment of the genuine desires of black people for a better life here on earth and as a means of channelling such desires in non-revolutionary directions.

Rawick attacks "the myth that slaves had no normal, significant family life, that for the most part they lived promiscuously, jumbled all together, with no male having a regular relationship with his children." (p. 78) Rather than providing a picture of promiscuity and irresponsibility, the narratives indicate that "the Afro-American family under slavery was part of a distinct, viable, black culture, adapted to slavery and deprivation." (p. 79) The nature of the family under slavery was a further means to develop institutions to support daily life and resistance, building the community. Moreover, by understanding this development of the family structure under slavery, we can better understand the contemporary forms of the black family.

> The slave community acted like a generalized extended kinship system in which all adults looked after all children and there was little division between "my children for whom I'm responsible" and "your children for whom you're responsible." I would suggest that such an extended kinship system was more functionally useful and integrative under the conditions of slavery under which both mother and father usually worked in the fields than would be one which emphasized the exclusive rights and duties of biological parents, the parents of the nuclear family. (p. 93)

The West African cultural traditions also provided models of folk characters who played major roles in the development of the community. The West African Anansi was a forefunner of the Afro-American Br'er Rabbit, who was utilized in the tales told by the slaves to their children as a means of self-expression and building up strength.

> In myth and folktale the slave not only acted out his desires, he accomplished much more than that. In his laughter and pleasure at the exploits of Anansi or Br'er Rabbit, he created for himself, out of his own being, that necessary self-confidence denied to him by so much of his environment. Anansi-Br'er Rabbit is both Sambo and Nat Turner, both the victim and the revolutionary, who manages to assert himself and his humanity and overcome his own inner victimization, the internalized reflection of his objective circumstances . . . These stories were part of the process by which the slaves gained enough footing to allow them to rebel. (p. 100)

These then were the major factors in the development of the black community -- various West African cultural traditions, familial networks, religion, folktales -- all functioned as modes of self-expression and interaction. Above all, they were means of carving out an autonomous social living space which allowed them to develop such a community and a set of institutions which provided "support and social confirmation" for acts of revolt and daily resistance by members and groups within that community. As Rawick writes:

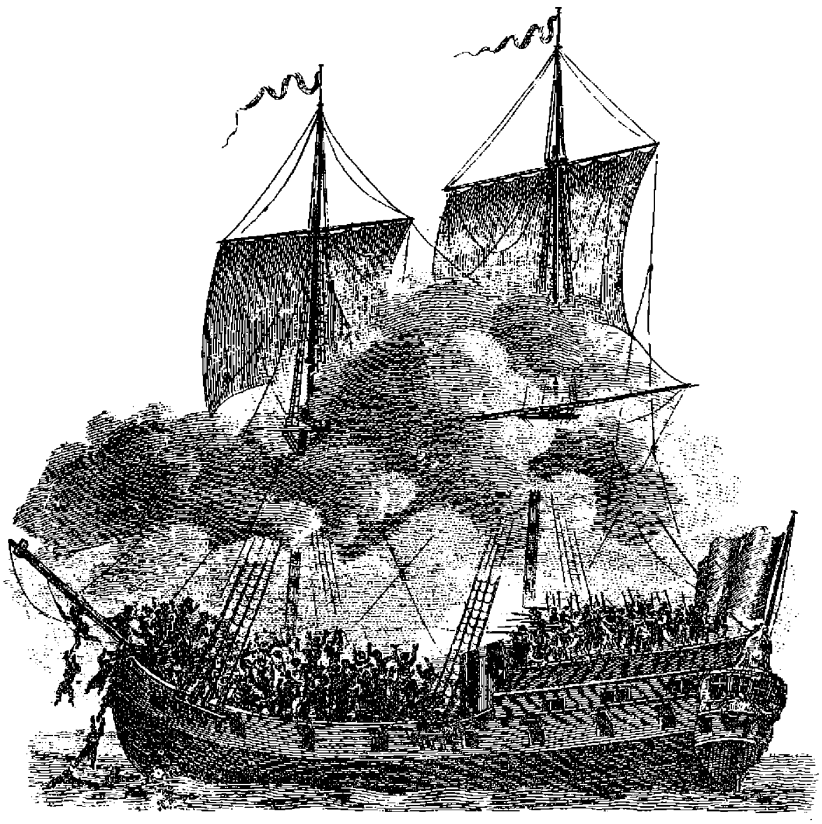
> "Either the oppressed continuously struggle in forms of their own choosing or they are defeated by life. Only they can know what they can and must do. The black community, slave and free, South and North, made itself, and in so doing brought about the abolition of slavery. It ~~did~~
>
> did this not out of a belief in ideological abstraction, but out of a felt inner necessity. (p. 96)

Slave revolts grew out of the development of this community, drawing courage and strength from its supportive function. Slaves and free blacks played vital roles in the abolitionist movement, the Underground Railway, and the Civil War. The black community was crucial in supporting and inspiring the activities of blacks and white Northerners against slavery. There were work stoppages, slowdowns, and sabotage among the slaves in the South, and some 200,000 fought in the Union Army. Rawick emphasizes that not only did blacks build their own community but that without their activity, in the various forms it took, their liberation could not have become a reality.

In the last part of the book, he develops a theory of the interconnection between the growth of racism and the spread of capitalism. He draws on notions from Winthrop Jordon (White Over Black), Reich (The Mass Psychology of Fascism), and Foucault (Madness and Civilization), in arguing that the rise of capitalism in Europe was accompanied by the repression of self-expression, sexuality, etc., in the name of rationality. Thus, when the Europeans first met West Africans they were struck more by the similarities of their life-styles to those that they had once been accustomed to but were now denied -- i.e., subsistance farming, relatively unrepressed behavior and attitudes, etc. -- rather than any great differences.

> The Englishman met the West African as a reformed sinner meets a comrade of his previous debaucheries. The reformed sinner very often creates a pornography of his former life. He must suppress even his knowledge that he has acted in that way or that he wanted to act that way. Prompted by his uneasiness at this great act of repression, he cannot leave alone those who live as he once did or as he still unconsciously desires to live. He must devote himself to their conversion or repression. (p. 132)

Such a situation was further exacerbated in the American South where whites had to confront and deal with blacks daily and where white women were the epitome of repressed sexuality. Racism cannot be explained then in vulgar economistic terms as a mere rationale for exploitation but can be better understood as the result of the confrontation of a culture formed with capitalist "rationality" with one as yet un-



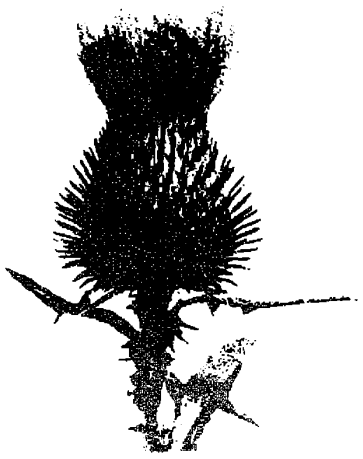
touched by such development. This indicates to us that racism will not disappear with the nationalization or even the socialization of the means of production alone. Rather, its disappearance can only be concomitant with the total human liberation, the overthrowing of all forms of repression, both external and internal, which have grown out of the capitalist mode of production. The unified struggle of the working class for control of its own activity is the necessary starting point for such total liberation. As Marx wrote in the German Ideology:

> . . . the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew. (p. 69)

Despite its contributions, ~~th~~ there are some weak points in the book, particularly in Rawick's evaluation of the material at hand. He seems to interpret all self-activity as part of a revolutionary process, overlooking in this case the possible implications of, for instance, his use of the notion of "adaptation." Indeed, the black community under slavery -- and now -- was and is supportive of individual and collective acts of rebellion. However, the community itself is structured more for adaptation -- that is, not assimilation or simple integration -- to American society, and, despite its serious differences in cultural tradition and sanctioned modes of behavior, its overall content need not be antithetical to the development of American capitalism. Today, the black community is allowed -- not without constant sgruggle -- considerable cultural autonomy as long as it allows the dominant economic institutions to further

sink their tentacles into its very life-blood, to exploit its supply of labor-power and take advantage of its captive market. (c.f. Robert Allen, Black Awakening in Capitalist America for an analysis of the American corporate response to black cultural nationalism.) Thus, Rawick emphasizes the supportive function of the black community for the rebellious aspects of slave behavior without asking for example why the slaves didn't rise up en masse in the South when their masters were off fighting the war, but rather chose to "liberate" themselves through fighting in the Union Army or engaging in strikes and slowdowns. Such questions are of importance today, especially in light of the growing interest in "working class self-activity" within the structure of capitalist society. Such activity is of no small importance because of the knowledge and solidarity it can develop among workers. But it cannot be seen as revolutionary in and of itself. "Adaptation" through self-activity, the carving of a "social living space," may be a necessary prerequisite for a sustained frontal attack on the capitalist system itself, but it is no substitute for it.

Pete Rachleff



OTHER DI

Herbert Marcuse was one of the writers who most influenced the thinking of the American New Left in the 1960's. His analysis of American society, despite its total rejection of that society, is deeply pessimistic. In One-Dimensional Man, Marcuse presents a picture of American capitalism as being capable of totally integrating all forms of opposition, because of its ability to reach into the depths of the minds of its citizens and not only meet their material needs, but create and control the development of those needs. For this reason, although he is in favor of a truly liberating, total revolution, he is extremely doubtful that one will ever take place, at least in the foreseeable future.

Rather than dealing with Marcuse on the abstract, ideological level of most of his analysis, Mattick attempts to criticize the concrete foundations upon which Marcuse has based his theory of "one-dimensional society". That is, "Marcuse bases his pessimism on what appears to him to be capitalism's newly gained ability to solve economic problems by political means" (p. 11). (Marcuse writes in the introduction to One-Dimensional Man that: "Our society distinguishes itself by conquering the centrifugal social for-

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ces with Technology rather than Terror, on the dual basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing standard of living", p. x). In other words, Keynesianism, i.e., state intervention in the economy to prevent the perpetual crises of laissez-faire capitalism, has solved the economic contradictions of capitalism, and hence removed the possibility for severe crisis. Mattick then devotes most of this little book to demonstrating that in no way can state intervention be seen as a solution to the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. In fact, the growth of the state sector will itself lead to crisis, because it is unable to deal with the fundamental problem of capitalist production, the inability to generate sufficient profits to ensure an expanding accumulation of capital. That is, capitalist "prosperity" is dependent upon the expansion of profitability, without which it will lapse into stagnation and crisis. (For a more thorough exposition of this point, and Mattick's entire analysis of the capitalist economy, see his book, Marx and Keynes: The Limits of the Mixed Economy, Boston, 1969). Mattick demonstrates quite clearly and simply what the nature of government and government-induced production must be. Since the government is not about to intervene against the interests of the bourgeoisie, "government-induced production must be non-competitive. If the government would purchase consumption goods and durables in order to give them away, it would, to the extent of its purchases, reduce the private market demand for these commodities. If it would produce either of these commodities in government-owned enterprises and offer them for sale, it would increase the difficulties of its private competitors by reducing their shares of a limited market demand. Government purchases, and the production it entails, must fall out of the market system; it must be supplementary to market production" (p. 17).

Therefore, "one can speak of the division of the economy into a profit-determined private sector and a smaller, nonprofitable public sector" (p. 17-18). Since the productive activities of the government can generate no value of their own, and thus no surplus-value and no profits for accumulation, their financing must come from other sources. "In other words, the products which the government 'purchases' are not really purchased, but given to the government free, for the government has nothing to give in return but its credit standing, which, in turn, has no other base than the government's taxing power and its ability to increase the supply of credit-money" (p. 19). Thus, the financing for the public sector must come from the surplus-value generated in the private sector. This immediately constitutes a drain on profits and capital accumulation in the private sector.

One might argue that the purpose of state intervention is nevertheless to aid this very process of private capital accumulation, by stimulating demand and creating necessary infrastructure for private capital. In the short run it may seem to have this effect. In fact, this is one of the reasons -- i.e., that private capital "is not profitable enough to assure its self-expansion" (p. 19) -- given for increasing the economic activity of the state. However, as

Mattick quite correctly argues, "profitability cannot be increased by way of non-profitable production" (p. 20). Thus, "because government-induced production is itself a sign of a declining rate of capital formation in the traditional sense, it cannot be expected to serve as the vehicle for the expansion of private capital effective enough to assure conditions of full employment and general prosperity. It rather turns into an obstacle to such expansion, as the demands of government on the economy, and the old and new claims on the government, divert an increasing part of the newly-produced profit from its capitalization to private account" (p. 20).

The implications of the growth of government intervention in the economy are thus far, far different from what Marcuse assumes. By no means has state intervention prevented potential crises -- although it has undeniably helped to postpone them -- or can it. As Mattick shows, state intervention is both a symptom of the continuing crisis of American capitalism, and, more and more, is itself contributing to that crisis. "The interventions themselves point to the persis tency of the crisis of capital production, and the growth of government-determined production is a sure sign of the continuing decay of the private enterprise economy. To arrest that decay would mean to halt the vast expansion of government-induced production and to restore the self-expansive powers of capital production; in short, it implies a reversal of the general developmental trend of twentieth century capitalism. As this is highly improbable, the state will be forced to extend its economic inroads into the private sectors of the economy and thus become itself the vehicle for the destruction of the market economy. But where the state represents private capital, it will do so only with great hesitation and against growing opposition on the part of private capital. This hesitation may be enough to change the conditions of an apparent 'prosperity' into conditions of economic crisis" (p. 21-22). Mattick also shows that technology and/or monopolization are unable to solve the problem of decreasing profitability for the economy as a whole. Moreover, war and depression, which were at one time possible choices for the capitalist class in the case of a declining profitability, are no longer feasible. The danger of war now -- that everything and everyone might be destroyed -- rules out its deliberate utilization. The political dangers of depression severe enough to make private accumulation again profitable enough to maintain growth are such as to militate against its use as well. Thus, increasing state intervention, seeking to postpone as long as possible a severe crisis, is the only real alternative for the capitalist class.

Having shown thatthe "stability" on which Marcuse bases his argument is in fact a tension-filled dynamic situation of only transitory historical significance, Mattick turns his attention to the possible outcomes of these dynamics. It is highly unlikely that the "mixed economy" will evolve smoothly into "state capitalism", since such a change would be revolutionary, although non-socialist. Such a revolution, i.e., turning from the mixed economy to one in which all productive property had been nationalized and was under the direction of the state, is a possible outcome of the crisis of private capitalist production. Another alternative would be a genuine proletarian revolution, based on the socialization of productive property and the reconstruction of the economy based on self-management by the producers and production based on satisfying the needs of society. Both these possibilities today exist as just that, as possibilities.

Meanwhile, "there is not enough dissatisfaction in present-day prosperous society, even if it is a false prosperity. Consequently there is one-dimensional thought, a society without opposition. As nothing else can be expected under such conditions, we have not gone into Marcuse's penetrating critical analysis of the

advanced industrial society's ruling ideology. Here we agree with all his observations and are thankful for them" (p. 91-92). Indeed, although Mattick generously agrees with the observations made by Marcuse, "what is true today is not necessarily true tomorrow, and will, in any case, be less so if the trend of capitalist development proceeds as it has in the past" (p. 94).

However, there are important questions which do not enter into this Marcuse-Mattick exchange. Neither addresses himself to the problem of how the nature of the present society -- its "one-dimensionality" -- may condition the nature of the future society that may grow out of it. Mattick is quite right when he says of Marcuse's analysis that "the whole idea stands or falls with the assumed ability of capitalism to maintain present standards of living for the working population. By all that has been said before, we denied capitalism this ability" (p. 101). But, because Marcuse is only concerned with examining present society and Mattick is here most concerned with demonstrating the fallacies of what Marcuse has done, the possible limiting effects of "one-dimensional society" on the individual potentiality to change -- or whether there are in fact any limits at all -- does not receive the serious consideration that it merits.

An understanding of which of the two alternatives -- state capitalism or genuine socialism -- delineated above is the probable outcome of the dynamics of contemporary capitalist society and how -- or if -- we can intervene in this dynamic to secure the one outcome as opposed to the other requires a great deal of serious thought and analysis. Indeed, the future will not be constructed out of whole cloth; not only will the material base inherited by a new society set limits on its immediate development, but so may the nature of present society as a whole limit the potentialities for individual and social personality change. Most analysis from the "left" on this question has been extremely abstract. There has been a great deal of pessimism about the ability of masses of people to transform themselves. Thus, Sweezy, for example, argues that a "cultural revolution" a la China, directed by a state, would be necessary after a revolution in order to create "socialist man". Others, on the other hand, such as Pannekoek, hold that the nature of current society is to be surpassed through the struggle against it. However, both sides remain at too abstract a level, ignoring the possible insights psychology may have to offer in this area.

For those who desire a genuine socialist society -- "the free and equal association of the producers" on the basis of total self-management -- such questions deserve much more consideration than they have received in the past. It is through disregarding such questions and failing to come to grips with the problems that they represent, due to an aversion to psychology, a belief in the infinite malleability of human nature over-night, or whatever, that an adequate understanding of the dynamics of contemporary society may never be attained. Although Mattick's critique of Marcuse is a valuable contribution to an understanding of society in refuting his pessimistic and mistaken analysis, it in itself does not take the reader far enough. Rather, it lays the basis from which a more total analysis can develop. This calls for a critical effort of immense difficulty on our part -- the effort to understand the social psychology of American capitalist society and the limits it may bring to bear on the content of a future society.

Critique Of Marcuse
Paul Mattick
Merlin Press, 1972

reviewed by P. Rachleff

UPS & DOWNS

Maurice Flamant and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, Modern Economic Crises and Recessions (harper Colophon CN 207, 1970) pp. 125, $1.75.*)

This slim volume is highly recommended to everyone interested in what used to be called the "material contradictions" of capitalism. It is pleasantly bare of the ideology and mystification usually found in economics books. In fact, it contains no theory at all, except that implicit in the decision to collect and summarize (in the form of a chronology of economic events, illustrated with graphs and tables) information on every significant economic crisis in Western Capitalism (specifically, in England, France, Germany, and the U.S.) from 1815 to 1967.

As the authors point out in their introduction, all societies have experienced difficulties and breakdowns in the production and distribution of goods.

> But the economic system that took shape in a few countries in the early nineteenth century had one notable feature which, in our view, sets it apart from the systems that preceeded it: that of having undergone a number of sudden, often violent fluctuations ... apparently periodic in character, recurring in a more or less regular way. (p.7)

The regular pattern of this recurrence, formalized in the concept of the business cycle, is amply brought out by the data presented in this book; a chart (p. 41) shows that the U.S. economy between 1855 and 1965 spent not much under half its life in depression.

This dependability of capitalist crisis is related to a feature which sets them apart from pre-capitalist economic breakdowns. As W.C. Mitchell showed in his very nice book on Business Cycles (1927), crises prior to the industrial revolution and the development of modern capitalism can be explained as the results of varied factors such as bad harvests, plagues, and wars, while modern crises (and prosperities) arise directly from the functioning of the business economy itself, so that "it is not until the uses of money have reached an advanced stage in a country that its economic vicissitudes take on the character of business cycles" with their boom-bust pattern.

Of course, this corresponds to the central difference between capitalist and non-capitalist economies: that in the former the process of production and distribution of goods, common to all societies, is mediated and regulated by the value character of production - i.e., by the fact that goods are produced for sale, at a profit, in the market. Capitalism is the first (and hopefully the last) social form in which there are "economic" (i.e., value) relationships between people, apparently distinct from other personal, social, political relations. Hence it is the first social form in which we find a "science" of economics and in which we experience economic crises.

The autonomy of the economic sphere in capitalism is indeed only an appearance. In capitalism as in other societies production and distribution are carried out within definite social relations, and it is just the nature of these relations in this system that gives rise to the phenomenon Marx called the fetishism of commodities, the circumstance that "the economy" seems to have laws of its own. These laws are the subject-matter of Capital, but Marx's main point is that they are the laws not of some autonomous realm of economics but

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*) The translation from the French original is satisfactory, except for the curious failure to translate the word milliard, which means "billion."

of a particular kind of class society. The importance of this lies in the consequence that the trend of capitalist economic development is to be understood as a trend of social development, of relations between the two main classes, capitalists and workers. Economic history, as the history of class relations and class struggle, opens up the possibility of a new kind of society: communism.

Here the phenomenon of crisis is all-important. In a crisis the social nature of economic phenomena becomes apparent to one and all: workers suffer when capitalists' need for profit isn't met. Just as the tendency to crisis is inherent in capitalism, so it is the experience of crisis which can force workers to recognize the inability of the system to satisfy their needs. One of the threads running through Modern Economic Crises is that of workers' responses to the succession of breakdowns: riots, organization, rebellions. History shows, however, that communist revolution does not - to put it mildly - follow automatically from economic collapse. On the one hand, that the system breaks down at all depends on the refusal of the worker to be exploited beyond a certain point (though it is caused by factors which operate even when the rate of exploitation remains constant). On the other, depression and war -the expression of structural crisis conditions - if not reponded to by revolutionary change, can serve as mechanisms whereby the system may gain a new lease on life. Nevertheless it remains true that all mass working class movements which at least raised the spectre of communism have come in response to conditions of deed crisis. We can only conclude that the future of revolution depends in part on the future of crisis.

As Flamant and Singer- Kerel remark, their data indicates "how the nature of crises changed as economic structures themselves changed." (p. 8) The material they present suggests a division into two main periods. (This word is meant loosely; I am not claiming a clear-cut disjunction of stages on capitalist development.)

1. The period up to the Great Depression of 1929 ff. During this time crises seem to have made possible the continued expansion of industrial capitalism, as mentioned above, by stimulating technical advances (and "rationalization" of the workplace), which raised the productivity of labor, as well as (less importantly for the long run) by cutting wages. The picture which emerges from the data conforms well to Marx's theory of crises as means by which capital structures are reorganized to deal with difficulties in the creation of profit. This period issued into a new phenomenon: the gruesome flowering of crisis (that of 1911-1913) into world war. Although the depth and destructiveness of this crisis gave rise in Marxist circles to hopes and predictions that it marked the end of capitalism, the war as the continuation of depression by other means made possible a reorganization of corporate structures on an international scale. Thus the war led to an expansion in the U.S. based in part on access to European markets and a large flow of American capital to Europe, particularly to Germany.

2. The Great Depression seems to have broken with tradition by failing to prepare the way for a renewed expansion. The extent and duration of the depression required government deficit spending - not at all a novel phenomenon - on a hitherto unequalled scale, along with varying degrees of state regulation of the private economy. In the form of the New Deal these policies led in the U.S. to a slight recovery in 1934. The attempt to reduce government spending in 1937 put an end to this; despite a quick return to increased budgetary deficit, U.S. unemployment still stood at 17% in 1939. The story is similar for England and France. In Germany the Nazi policy of armaments production and public works restored industrial output to the pre-crisis level. But this of course represented not a boom for market production in the traditional sense but onla a preparation for the second transformation of depression into world war.

Even the war, however, did not suffice to restore boom-producing profitability

conditions. Even more so that in World War I, the U.S. came to dominate world capitalism, supplying European markets for goods and - more importantly - capital, as well as inheriting many of Europes colonial possessions. Yet the post-war expansion in America came to an end in 1948; stagnation and unemployment were dealt with only by an increase in government spending. This pattern (state spendning - expansions - cuts in state spending - recessions - state spending for recovery), in which the regular business cycle interacts with fluctuations in governmental economic activity, emerges from the Flamant/Singer-Kerel data as a dominant feature of capitalism from the Second World War on - or indeed, from the 'thirties on, since the war itself can be considered as massive state spending.

A particularly clear example is furnished by the Korean War period. In 1952, arms and other state expenditure gave rise to business expansion. In 1953, with the end of hostilities, arms spending was cut. The result was recession; of necessity in 1954 "the Republican administration changed its /anti-deficit spending/ attitude six months after coming to power and took some measures to stimulate activity," both by credit expansion and by increased government spending. (p. 91) The same story emerges for the 1957 recession; for that of 1960-61; for the economic "stresses ... apparent by the middle of 1965" (p. 115), offset by Vietnam spending; and for the dcline in GNP in late 1966-early 1967, provoked by spending cuts and eased by a record budgetary deficit.

The same picture holds, generally, for Europe, despite the expansion made possible by wartime destruction of capital value and massive american investment. In England and France the same seesaw between state spending and recession or stagnation can be observed in the data. Germany has had the most sustained expansion, but even this, which in earlier recession periods merely dropped, was transformed into a distinct decline in output in 1966. Since 1967 - the point at which the account given in Modern Economic Crises ends - stagnation has become a common feature of all capitalist countries (including Italy and Japan), which thus find themselves today faced - in a form only more extreme than before in the post-war period - with the choice between depression, mild or serious, and yet more state spending and the erosion of private capital's freedom of action this brings with it.

In short, the Great Depression has turned out to mark not - as economists and practically everybody else trumpeted or lamented in the '50s and '60s - the end of the business cycle and the beginning of crisis-free capitalism, but the onset of permanent depression. This depression - stagnation of the private capitalist economy - has been compensated for and hidden from social experience by the growth of governmental economic activity. But today Marx's assessment of capitalism's nature - that the very mechanism of its progress produces recurrent crisis - is more clearly correct than ever. The "contradiction" Marx discerened is captured very neatly in the brief remarks that close this volume: that

> Despite too frequent assertions to the contrary, the problem of economic crises is not outmoded today; it has not been overcome. Crises may have changed in frequency, in severity, even in their basic character, but ... they certainly appear to represent a feature of capitalist development. (p. 118)

and that

> The capitalist system, whose origins were also those of economic expansion itself, has more and more need of expansion if it is to function. (p. 119)

Expansion leads to crisis. What remains to be seen is whether the working class will react to crisis finally by putting an end to the system which produces it.

L.K.R.

NOTES ON PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LEFT

Following the example of such writers as Reich and Marcuse, radicals are prone to taking the underlying ideas of psychoanalysis as a starting-point for thinking about the psychological questions raised when we think about society and how to change it. How adequate are these ideas for our purposes? The following notes are intended to stimulate thought on this subject:

1) Radicals have been attracted to Freud because he asserts the existence of a conflict between human beings and their conditions of life. They criticize society in Freudian terms, as repressing the instinctual drives of the human organism. Freud, however, saw here an inevitable conflict between organism and environment. He sees inactivity, nirvana, sleep, or even death as the states to which people would tend if their instinctual needs were fulfilled; they would never engage in action were they not painfully forced to by their internal needs and the world of external reality.

2) This view ignores the fact, established by Jean Piaget and others, that from the first weeks of life human beings actively explore and manipulate their environment, even when compelled by no external force or internal hunger. Indeed, they take pleasure in it. Far from having to be compelled to relate to their environment, people show a strong tendency to do so as a basic feature of organismic life. The conflict between individuals and "reality" per se is a myth. So is the view that the strongest human desire is to abolish all stimulation and activity.

3) This view is also useless for purposes of social change, since it assumes that the fundamental problem lies in civilization per se, not in its specific organization. This makes it static and ahistorical; it implies that changing historical conditions do not change the human condition. (For this reason, Marcuse in Eros and Civilization abandons this position entirely, while trying at the same time to claim an altogether spurious Freudianism.)

4) Although the human organism naturally develops a capacity to interact with its environment, this by no means denies the reality of conflict with the environment, with a specific reality; quite the contrary. For the development of this capacity occurs only through its use, through action, through practice. This has been indicated by such varied investiagtors as Jean Piaget, George Kelly (cf. Theory of Personal Constructs) and Earnest Schactel (cf. Metamorphosis). Only the freedom to explore, to try things out, to test, allows capacities to grow. Capacities are directly stunted by those who limit others' field of activity and norrow their exploration, as surely as muscles are stunted when forbidden adequate exercise.

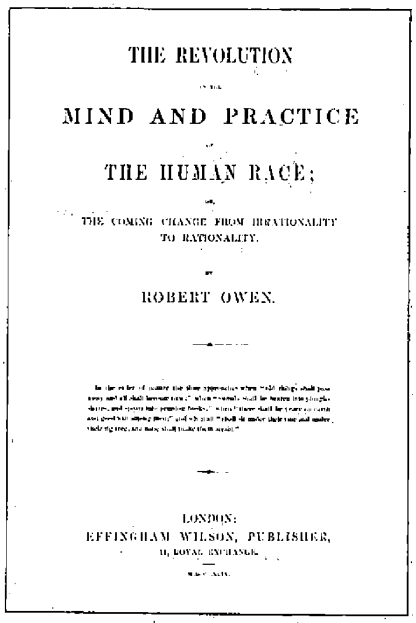
5) This constriction of individual psychological development is precisely what happens in class societies, where the range of actions allowed the majority of people is sharply limited by a minority wielding power over them. To the extent that the family, school, and other institutions of socialization are well adapted to prepare people for their narrow repetitive round of activities in such societies, they do so by crippling the capacities for self-direction, cooperation, and understanding before they have a chance to develop. It is this constriction of development at every stage that should form the basis for a critique of the psychological effects of the rule of society for the benefit of a minority. This approach reveals that the conflict between individuals and their conditions of life is social, not biological.

6) This approach also has strong implications for the radical movement itself. Life today is, for the great majority of people, limited to carrying out orders or choosing among alternatives already established by a managerial elite. This means that most people have little opportunity to organize their own activities and therefore develop little confidence in their capacity to do so. Yet such confidence and capacity are necessary if

we are ever to manage society. Since people cannot gain the experience they need to develop these qualities in those areas of life which are dominated by the social order, they must do so in the revolutionary movement, the struggle against that order, itself. Control of the movement must stay in the hands of its rank-and-file participants if they are ever to gain the abilities they need to transform society and with it their own lives.

7) Only a psychology based on people's potential ability to organize and direct their own activity in freedom is useful in thinking about a society based on that ability. Psychoanalytic theory and, curiously enough, its main current rival, behaviourism, share a denial of this ability. Their advocates are only logical in using them to defend the idea that society cannot survive without a ruling authority.

8) Historical development cannot be explained by "human psychology" or "human nature" in general. "Human nature" must be seen as a historically evolving and developing set of capacities, limited at any point by existing social relations.



THE REVOLUTION

IN THE

MIND AND PRACTICE

OF

THE HUMAN RACE;

OR,

THE COMING CHANGE FROM IRRATIONALITY TO RATIONALITY.

BY

ROBERT OWEN.

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The True Levellers Standard

a) In the beginning of time the great creator, Reason, made the earth to be a common treasury, to preserve beasts, birds, fishes and man, the lord that was to govern this creation....But not one word was spoken in the beginning that one branch of mankind should rule over another.... But....selfish imaginations....did set up one man to teach and rule over another. And thereby....man was brought into bondage, and became a greater slave to such of his own kind than the beasts of the field were to him.

And hereupon the earth....was hedged in to enclosures by the teachers and rulers, and the others were made....slaves. And that earth, that is within this Creation made a common storehouse for all, is bought and sold and kept in the hands of a few, whereby the great Creator is mightily dishonoured, as if he were a respecter of persons, delighting in the comfortable livelihood of some and rejoicing in the miserable poverty and straits of others. From the beginning it was not so....

Wherefore is it that there is such wars and rumours of wars in the nations of the earth? And wherefore are men so mad to destroy one another? But only to uphold civil property of honour, dominion and riches one over another....But when once the earth becomes a common treasury again, as it must....then this enmity of all lands will cease, and none shall dare to seek dominion over others, neither shall any dare to kill another, nor desire more of the earth than another.

b) We whose names are subscribed do in the name of all the poor oppressed people in England declare unto you that call yourselves lords of manors and lords of the land that ....the power of enclosing land and owning property was brought into the Creation by your ancestors by the sword; which first did murder their fellow creatures, men, and after plunder or steal away their land, and left this land successively to you, their children. And therefore, though you did not kill or thieve, yet you hold that cursed thing in your hand by the power of the sword; and so you justify the wicked deeds of your fathers, and that sin of your fathers shall be visited upon the head of you and your children to the third and fourth generation, and longer too, till your bloody and thieving power be rooted out of the land.

Gerard Winstanley 1649